INVENTING ZIN/OGRAPHY:
TOWARD A METHOD OF IDENTIFICATION

By

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Whereas in previous decades literacy was exclusively alphabetic,

today literacy is both alphabetic and electronic. The humanities' pedagogy, however, remains exclusively alphabetic. Herein lies the crisis. My dissertation project, *Inventing Zin/ography: Towards a Methodology of Identification*, generates a new pedagogical strategy for teaching literacy in today's university setting.

This dissertation is a grammatological project; that is, it is a study of the history and theory of writing. The humanities' current pedagogical strategies are geared toward teaching alphabetic literacy -- the book, the essay, the treatise -- while our student's personal and professional worlds are now also organized by electronic literacy -- the computer, in particular. As humanities' scholars, it is our responsibility to understand how we read and write differently with computers while teaching our students to navigate the electronic as well as the alphabetic worlds creatively and intelligently.

This study investigates Cindy Sherman's *Untitled Film Stills* and Roland Barthes' *A Lover's Discourse* as a liberal arts mode of research and writing, not just as objects of study. Reading these projects as a discourses on method, *Inventing Zin/ography* adopts

Sherman's and Barthes' strategies for researching the nature of electronic literacy in order to generate a new pedagogy. This dissertation project uses these projects to generate a set of instructions for understanding the electronic literacy of today. *Inventing Zin/ography* suggests a method for teaching students to learn how to learn by demonstrating how to invent new research strategies from old.

INTRODUCTION

My students at the university, while technically literate, are functionally illiterate, and they are functionally illiterate because the discipline of knowledge which proposes to teach them to read and write is in the midst of a pedagogical crisis. This crisis is triggered by a shift in the technology with which we now read and write. Whereas in previous decades literacy was exclusively alphabetic, today literacy is both alphabetic and electronic. The humanities' pedagogy, however, is still exclusively alphabetic. Herein lies the crisis. The project that follows uses heuretics to invent a new pedagogy for teaching literacy in today's university setting.

This dissertation is a grammatological project; that is, it is a study of the history and theory of writing. In *Orality and Literacy*, Walter Ong considers the logic of electronic literacy, a stage in the history of writing which Ong describes as secondary orality. Ong suggests that electronic literacy is a secondary orality because the logic of electronic writing is hybrid; it crosses the associative logic of oral tradition with the linear logic of alphabetic tradition. The humanities' current pedagogical strategies are geared toward teaching alphabetic literacy -- the book, the essay, the treatise -- while our student's personal and professional worlds are now also organized by electronic literacy--the computer, in particular. As humanities' scholars, it is our responsibility to understand how we read and write differently with computers while teaching our students to navigate the electronic as well as the alphabetic worlds creatively and intelligently. So, how do we teach electronic literacy? In answering this question, I develop a pedagogical method that investigates and teaches the logic of electronic literacy while demonstrating the complementary nature of research and teaching.

History

The history of this project is very much tied to my familial history. I grew up in a house with two Elvis fans. Some of my earliest memories are of my mother waiting in seemingly endless lines to buy concert tickets -- only to sit a half mile away from the stage, watching the performance through binoculars. My mother always said that it didn't matter -- all that mattered was breathing the same air as Elvis.

While most of my colleagues could identify common themes in their graduate work, I never felt sure of my interests in that way. My hesitation to commit to any one 'object of study' was, for quite some time, a problem, I thought -- until it occurred to me that what was common to my work was an attitude rather than an object. Most of my work was colored by a fannish attitude. Fandom ties together my fields of interest: cultural studies, film studies and computers and writing.

My attraction to and interest in practice, which initially introduced me to video production, suggested not only a medium for this project (hypermedia) but also a methodology: *heuretics*. That is,

I wanted my project to not only involve fandom, but to also involve doing something with the things I've learned about research, schooling, entertainment and technology while studying at the University of Florida. Thus, in the project that follows, I work heuretically with fandom. What would it be to make something with fandom?

Cultural Studies

Although, at first glance, it may not look like it, I consider this project to be a cultural studies project, or to be a project that offers something to the field of cultural studies. With *Inventing Zin/ography*, I am interested in making something with various lessons of cultural studies. Applying an heuretic attitude, I ask: how can I make cultural studies knowledge do something? My interest in cultural studies as a discipline has never lain with explaining popular texts or their functions, but rather with imagining what things cultural studies' understanding of popular texts might allow us to do. While I have been able to explore this approach in my teaching and video production work, with this project I wanted to extend these explorations. I thought, cultural studies knows a lot

about fandom, so what can I do with what we already know? How can I make that knowledge useful? In some very serious ways, zin/ography issues forth from this desire.

Film Studies

Yet, I also consider *Inventing Zin/ography* to be a film studies project. Not only because my engagement of fan writing depends on the fan/star equation, but also because my film studies training has directed my approach to hypermedia in a way that I think is fairly unique. In the project that follows, I think about hypermedia as a social machine and about visual aesthetics in ways I have learned from film studies. I suggest that some of the founding lessons of film studies are indeed applicable to hypermedia.

For instance, with this project I wanted to generate a method which would unlock some of the theoretical promise of hypermedia. Film studies teaches us that the technology will not do anything in particular on its own. To make the technology function, you need a method -- institutional practices. Left to entertainment, cinema (the apparatus) produces realism with the technology of film by using a particular method: continuity editing, centering, etc. With

hypermedia, entertainment reproduces "journalistic" writing (which is linear and expository). We now see that most screen design mimics the layout of slick entertainment industry magazines. With *Inventing Zin/ography* I attempt to generate a different form for hypermedia writing -- one which engages the decentered, multi-linear, multi-vocal promise of the technology.

<u>Computers and Writing</u>

Most clearly, this project looks like a computers and writing project. My sense is that for various reasons (which have little to do with education or research) many writing departments have found themselves possessing a lot of technology that they don't know what to do with. Certainly, such was the case at the University of Florida when the College of Liberal Arts and Science received a grant from IBM to build several online computer labs. What might we do in the face of this new technology?

Cultural studies' analyses demonstrate that entertainment knows exactly what to do with these machines. I found that my desire to work with fandom dovetailed nicely with entertainment's use of the web. That is, entertainment has the commercial end

which tries to sell you things on the web (including "subscriptions" to particular sites) and the fan end -- which generates the bulk of "amateur" web writing. Fan desire -- whether it be media fandom or a porsche club -- drives the most of the web writing we see today when surfing the Internet. What do my students want to do on the first day of class? They want to put Hootie and the Blowfish images on their homepages.

With this project, I wanted to harness this fan energy to fuel a different kind of writing machine. How can we, I asked myself, make these online labs work as useful machines? As a computers and writing project, zin/ography tries to do two things: engage the kind of socially constructed or postmodern subject that computers and writing suggests is writing with this media and engage the theoretical promise of hypertext. Not unlike its relationship to cultural studies, where computers and writing is concerned, *Inventing Zin/ography* tries to make use of some particular kinds of disciplinary knowledge.

CHAPTER 2

BEING IN PICTURES

An ongoing effect of cultural studies research has been to destabilize and de-essentialize standard categories of identity -- race, class, nationality, gender, sexuality, ethnicity. But such a deconstructive effect is not an end in itself for cultural studies, for its goal is not to arrive at fractures, fragments, and differences which can themselves in turn be fetishized. Cultural studies undertakes the much more difficult project of holding identities in the foreground, acknowledging their necessity and potency, examining their articulation and rearticulation, and seeking a better understanding of their function. [1]

I would like to begin by borrowing a concept from film studies -- that of the apparatus. As a discipline, film studies understands the apparatus of *cinema* to be comprised of the technology of film, the institutional practices of film, and the subjectivity film proposes. Cinema represents a particular organization of these three

points. Writing too, I would like to suggest, functions as an apparatus, as there are particular technologies, institutional practices, and subjectivities that comprise the phenomenon that we call writing. Various organizations of these three points produce different kinds of writing such as journalism, academic writing, and electronic literacy. In part, I interest myself with the similarities and differences between these latter two types of writing to the extent that this comparison provides direction for inventing new institutional practices of electronic literacy. (Currently, electronic literacy is practiced most prolifically by the entertainment industry. My interest lies in developing practices of electronic literacy for institutions of higher learning.) Having borrowed the concept of the apparatus, I would like to reiterate that as an apparatus, writing is made up not only of technologies and institutional practices, but also of concepts of subjectivity. In what follows, I focus on elucidating the characteristics of these subjectivities and their relationships to the institutional practice of academic writing. Chapter two, *Grammatology in Electronic School*, returns to the concept of the apparatus to address questions of writing technologies and institutional practices.

Academic writing posits a rational and autonomous individual as its subject. Correspondingly, its school practices both assume and work to replicate this subject. The electronic apparatus, however, posits a constructivist theory of subjectivity. This more postmodern subject is most thoroughly theorized by the work of cultural studies. Corresponding institutional practices, however, are yet to be invented. Herein lies the goal of *Inventing Zin/ography*. The differences between subject formations, in part, determine what is and is not an appropriate institutional practice for any particular apparatus. In conjunction with electronic technologies of writing, this shift in our concept of the subject demands that we, as educators and writing instructors, reimagine and reinvent the practices of Schooling for a changing apparatus.

The Socially Constructed Subject

How is the subject socially constructed? What does it mean to say that? In order to understand these questions, to understand what it means to imagine a socially constructed subject, *Inventing*

Zin/ography looks to the discipline of cultural studies for explanations. For while cultural studies has always theorized just such a subject, the discipline continually rethinks the particular nature of this social subject; through this rethinking cultural studies brings its own orientation to traditional forms of analysis like sociology, economics, and critical theory. For instance, although cultural studies often uses ethnographic surveys, the discipline has always jettisoned the positivism of the social sciences. Despite cultural studies' adaptation of traditional forms of analysis, Simon During's "Introduction" to *The Cultural Studies Reader* explains that two features have characterized cultural studies from its inception: a focus on subjectivity and an engaged form of analysis. Cultural studies' investigation of the relationship between culture and individual lives marks its break with positivism and its involvement with the political. Thus cultural studies differs from both the 'objective' social sciences and traditional literary criticism which assumes that texts maintain a constant value across time and space -- that is, those modes of analysis which assume that who you are socially can be put aside and made not to enter into what you think and how you understand.

While modern Western culture values a form of subjectivity which suggests that there are 'deep' selves which cannot be reduced to the subject positioned by external fields and discourses, cultural studies proposes that subjectivity primarily consists of practices and strategies which engage those fields and discourses.

Because zin/ography proposes to stage the socially constructed subject, it is useful to understand what cultural studies theory says and has said about this subjectivity. One way of understanding the development of cultural studies' thinking concerning the subject is to look at its anthologized history. Simon During's "Introduction" to the *Cultural Studies Reader* provides a brief history of the discipline with which we can better understand the development of this idea of subjectivity. Early in the life of the discipline, cultural studies moved between culturalist and structuralist types of analysis. The culturalist strands emphasized forms of everyday life while the structuralist strands were mainly semiotic, that is they focused on analyses of codings and recodings rather than uses, practices, or feelings. Structuralist analyses looked to texts as objects while culturalist analyses considered relationships between texts and readers. Nevertheless, both forms

of analysis assumed that the subject was socially constructed. Initially, cultural studies took interest mainly in the effects of class interests on people's everyday lives. For instance, Althusser developed a structural analysis which theorized that individuals are constructs of ideology. Ideology, he argued, is employed by the state and capitalism to reproduce the means of production without risking revolution. The state is not neutral (as it likes to portray itself) but rather works to protect the exploitative means of production that are required by capitalism. During notes that "for Althusser, dominant ideology turned what was in fact political, partial, and open to change into something seemingly 'natural', universal, and eternal"[2]: class differences. In this instance, the primary role of ideology is to construct an imaginary picture of civil life wherein the nuclear family is neutral and the individual is 'unique' and 'free'. "Ideology," argues During, "fragments real connections and interdependencies producing a picture of social relations which overemphasizes individual freedom and autonomy."[3] Ideology is seductive because it makes sense of the world for people by allowing them to enter the symbolic order and ascribe themselves power. People identify with ideology because in it they see

themselves pictured as independent and strong; dominant social values are internalized through this identification.

While Althusser's form of ideology critique proved useful to cultural studies for a while, this structuralist approach failed to account for the capacity of an individual or community to act on the world in its own terms or to generate its own meanings and effects. Ideology critique posits that people are 'cultural dopes' who are absolutely powerless against dominant ideology. It fails to account for local differences and to pay attention to the actual techniques and practices by which individuals form themselves and their lives. In response, the culturalist tradition offered the notion of *polysemy*. Polysemy suggests that a particular signifier maintains more than one meaning because meaning is an effect of differences within a larger system. Polysemy views cultural production as a process of hybridization and negotiation. "Concepts like hybridization," notes During "as they developed out of the notion of 'polysemy', return us to a renewed culturalism because they enable us to see how particular individuals and communities can actively create new meanings from signs and cultural products which come from afar."[4] In this culturalist moment, cultural studies clearly displayed its

interest in the means by which groups with the least power develop their own readings of and uses for cultural products in order to have fun, to resist the dominant order, or to articulate their own identity.

In the late 1970s French theory introduced to the discipline of cultural studies the idea that individuals live in a setting constructed of differing social fields or institutions. These fields include but are not limited to the institutions of family, school, work, peer groups, and political parties. Identity was not only tied to class interests. Like Althusser's theory of dominant ideology, each of these fields contained its own imaginary. Unlike Althusser's theory, the French theorists (Foucault, Bourdieu, and De Certeau) argued that each field contains choices of self-formation because each field contains a variety of styles of belonging (for example, you could be this or that kind of daughter). While some fields are highly directive (school, for instance) in others individuals are able to work out strategies to advance or reconcile themselves to their current position. Within this theoretical model, During points out that "the possibility also exists for undermining or transgressing the routine and hierarchy of the fields through passive resistance, ironic mimicry, symbolic inversion, orgiastic letting-go, or even

day-dreaming..."[5] Where subjectivity is concerned, it is important to note that in this French theory people are not wholly positioned by the system that these fields constitute. Theoretically, individuals can always make choices that take into account the forces that they know are positioning them. In Teresa De Lauretis' terms, human beings are "embodied social subjects." "An individual's relation to the fields continually incorporates and shifts under the impact of contingent givens (skin color, physical appearances, and so on) and material events (illness, technological breakdowns, and so on) which are not simply determinants of social or cultural forces."[6] Because it conceives of fields as partially autonomous, the French model breaks with earlier forms of cultural studies by downplaying the way economic distress operates systematically across many fields. With French theory, there is no *organized* system of control. This theory affirms forms of resistance only possible in the cracks and gaps of larger, apparently impregnable systems.

John Fiske explains the operation of these social fields, or axes as he calls them, in his book *Power Plays, Power Works*. Fiske notes that whereas cultural studies began its work on and with a structural world which was constituted by relatively stable

categories like class, the West is now a more fluid world. After World War II, the identity of the working class *as* working class fragmented, and cultural theorists came to realize that identity was conflictual and political rather than simply a matter of particular class interests and values. Prior to the second world war, class had been the core marker of identity, of difference, and cultural studies had focused more on how culture was organized from afar by the 'culture industry'. After the second world war, other differences became more acutely recognizable and thus identifiable. For instance, the influx of immigrants from the colonies brought race and national identity to the forefront in Britain; in response, cultural studies shifted from a structural to a poststructural approach to culture and identity. Multiple axes of social difference (of which race, class, gender, and age are the most prominent) constitute the world of late capitalism as poststructural rather than structural while the dissolution of working class identity as the core of social identity is directly related to the emergence of this more fluid, poststructural world. "Contemporary capitalist societies are too highly elaborated to be understood by a structural model," notes Fiske "and, as a result, class can no longer occupy a

position of theoretical centrality but must take its place alongside other axes around which social identities and social systems are organized. It is still important, but it has been joined by race/ethnicity and gender as perhaps the core axes of social difference."[7] Even this core is uncertain; it may be joined by other axes such as age, marital status, religion, sexual orientation, region, or locality -- or it may be completely dislodged by one of these others at any moment. While class still matters, it matters differently than when it was the salient social axis.

During argues that in the context of what he calls the 'new right' (Thatcherism and Reaganism) and French theory, cultural studies oriented itself around the 'culture of difference' and became a global movement. Within the culture of difference, community or group identity changed from nation or class to include also feminism, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc.; there no longer was such a thing as "society." Because the new right argues that the affirmation of internal difference threatens national unity, the nation is defined in terms of traditional and popular national-cultural images (such as Englishness or Americanness). The new right promotes an image of monoculture which requires the

devaluation of other identities. In response, cultural studies became internationalized and moved away from a Marxian analysis based on class. In the context of the new right, analyses of racism, sexism, and the culture industry possess a wider appeal than analyses of British working-class culture.

With internationalization, notes During, came theoretical postmodernism; cultural studies criticized the notion that any theory could stand outside the field it claimed to tell about as if it were a metadiscourse. Theory is now conceived as a discursive practice produced in a particular field with particular power effects. According to During, theoretical postmodernism put an end to the appeal of "those 'grand narratives' by which institutions and discourses bearing the modernizing values of universal liberty, equality and progress were affirmed in the name of a trans-historical, meta-discursive subject."[8] This new cultural studies, inspired by work in feminism, has begun to affirm 'other' ways of life on their own terms. "Emphasis shifted," notes During "from communities positioned against large power blocs and bound together as classes or subcultures to ethnic and women's groups committed to maintaining and elaborating autonomous values,

identities, and ethics."[9]   The cultural studies of the culture of difference represents the most decentered moment for cultural studies so far. Cultural studies conceives of the relations between these dispersed communities in two ways: new alliances and cross-identifications can be worked out for provisional social or micro-political ends and relations between groups will be dialogic wherein the otherness of each interacting participant remains in tact. "Whatever the effectiveness of these solutions," argues During "celebrations of the 'other' sounded a powerful oppositional note where governments attempted to encourage or enforce monoculturalism and traditional gender models on the nation."[10] This new cultural studies has become the academic site for marginal or minority discourses. It turns away from attacking mass culture as the new right buttresses its monoculturalism by traditionalist appeals to the canon. Instead, cultural studies analyzes various forms of cultural production and modes of cultural reception while considering questions of pleasure, corporeality, fantasy, identification, affect, desire, critique and transgression. Taking up Roland Barthes' notion that polysemous texts generate intense and

liberating pleasures, cultural studies has moved toward 'cultural populism' which suggests that popular culture provides "pleasure in the processes of making meaning"[11]

Inventing Zin/ography accepts the socially constructed subject as a premise. As a grammatological experiment, Inventing Zin/ography provides a means for writers to stage their socially constructed identities. By combining a politics of resistance with a poststructural notion of subjectivity, this project takes up cultural studies' interrelation of areas such as gender, nationhood, postcoloniality, race, and identity politics to demonstrate that the so-called "self" that underpins ideological formations is not a unified, but is rather a contradictory subject. How do people (including students) come to know themselves as contradictory subjects? In the section that follows, I argue that people come to recognize their identities as contradictory in part through their conception of and relation to stars. Zine writing is bound up with the equation star identity/fan identification. As an expression and articulation of fan identification, zine writing often stages the socially constructed identity of its writers. Consider for a moment the zine (which appears in both hypermedia and paper versions) Girls

Can Do Anything. C. Kile, the zine's author, uses her zine as a forum for expressing her multiple identities: post-adolescent girl/third wave feminist (these are the image-repertoires most thoroughly explored in her zine). *Girls Can Do Anything* provides C. Kile a forum for investigating these conflicting identifications. Similarly, the collected authors of the zine *Melrose Valhalla* articulate a parodic resistance to the culture's pre-fab attempt at articulating their identity for them through the phenomenon Generation X; in *Melrose Valhalla*, Generation X writes back. Zine writing affords its writers a glimpse at their social construction because, historically, it has been bound up with star identification. For C. Kile, her fan identification focuses on texts like Courtney Love and the Bionic Woman; as the name implies, *Melrose Valhalla* explores its writers' fan identifications with the characters on the Fox television show *Melrose Place*. Zine writing emerges at the point wherein fans recognize the fictive construction of either stars or characters; the notion that stars and characters are malleable constructs invites the play of fan writing. How have we (as a culture) come to know stars as constructs? And what effect has that knowledge had on our concept of selfhood? Our knowledge of the star system and its

mechanisms for constructing stars tells us something about how people are now coming to know their social selves.

Stars

What is the star experience? In *Picture Personalities: The Emergence of the Star System in America*, Richard DeCordova ties the star experience (and with it the star system) to the emergence of a particular kind of cultural knowledge. Stars begin to occur when audiences are able to associate particular names with the production of films. Until audiences are able to name the people involved in film production, stars are an impossibility. Historically, the cultural knowledge which marks the emergence of star status circulated around the site of the actor. Starting with the widening of the discourse on acting (to include film as well as stage performances), this knowledge moved through the discourse on picture personalities and ended with the star phenomenon. The widening of the discourse on acting, notes DeCordova, is important to the making of stars as it superseded the discourse on the apparatus which suggested that machines, not people, made films.

Prior to the late teens and early 1920s, most discussion of the art of filmmaking focused on the magic of the technology to the exclusion of human labor. The discourse on acting worked to resituate the site of textual productivity in human rather than machine labor, thus making that production identifiable. The discourse on acting individuated films and invited the rise of the star phenomenon not only by making particular filmic productions identifiable but also by singling out particular players or actors for audience identification.

DeCordova suggests the picture personality, a name, as the cinema's first site of individuation. "What the name designated above all," suggests DeCordova, "was a form of intertextuality, the recognition and identification of an actor from film to film."[12] Knowledge of picture personalities circulated around and was produced by/about the players' professional existence, particularly his/her screen presence. Entertainment news played a role as well. For journalism, the name of the player was important because it marked a site of hidden knowledge. Early on, the studios worked hard to keep the "real" names of actors unknown. One actor might be known by one name on the stage, another on the screen, and yet a

third with his/her family. Stage actors often desired to keep knowledge of their "true" acting on the stage separate from knowledge of the mere posing they did before motion picture cameras. The studios capitalized on this desire by constructing an elaborate cat-and-mouse game for audiences and journalists alike to play. The secreting of players' actual names challenged audiences to discover the true identities of picture personalities. The discovery of identity, however, remained only the discovery of names. Where the intertextuality of picture personalities was concerned, knowledge about the players was restricted to the textuality of the films they were in; it did not extend to the players' personal lives. The site of interest and knowledge remained the personality of the player *as depicted in film*.

The star, however, notes DeCordova, is characterized by the equation professional life/private life. The star marks the emergence of a knowledge about the players' existence outside of film. Stars have private lives, and these private lives emerged as new sites of knowledge and truth. As DeCordova suggests, "the real hero was made to behave like the reel hero."[13] Initially, knowledge of the star was restricted to this analogy. Private lives were not

allowed to contradict film lives -- especially in moral tenor. The star system augmented the power of the cinema by extending its textual and ideological functioning into the discourse of the star. As the private lives of players became valorized sites of knowledge, the studios regulated that knowledge. The discourse on the star asserted the cinema as a healthy phenomenon (as opposed to the known debauchery of the theater). Stars were to double the family discourse produced in the films of that era with their own lives.

The cultural knowledge which informs star status did not emerge easily. Alexander Walker's book *Stardom: The Hollywood Phenomenon* reveals the rocky history of the struggle between the various forces in Hollywood that contributed to the creation of the star system. Walker's history investigates the emergence of the star system in Hollywood by tracing the shift from picture player to star and then moves on to explore the shift from the star system to the "new stardom" of the 1960s and 1970s. This "new stardom" transformed stars from property to free agents. The history of the star phenomenon is important for zin/ography because it illustrates something about how people have come to conceive identity.

People's conception of identity in their heros and role models reflects on their conception of their own identity.

Stars, argues Walker, are the direct or indirect reflection of the needs, drives, and dreams of American society. In order to insure that certain players would reflect these desires, studios constructed personas for their players. Separate from (yet often similar to) their on-screen characters, these personas became an alternative self for many players. The belief that s/he is 'someone else' was often reported as the accompanying emotion of star status -- and it's no wonder, the studios and entertainment press worked hard to construct alternative subjectivities for players and their fans. In fact, the studios often constructed a subjectivity to answer audience desire and then hired someone to play the part -- twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, year after year after year. For instance, William Fox created his own star: Theda Bara. Fox constructed a ready-made persona and later hired an actress to be the part. While actually the demure daughter of a tailor from Cincinnati nee Theodosia Goodman, she was remodelled by the Fox publicity department into the image of a sex siren. Her star status held that she was the child of a sheik and princess born in Egypt and

weaned on serpent's blood; she was to have been given in mystic marriage to the Sphinx, fought over by nomadic tribesmen, to be clairvoyant, and insatiably lustful. Audiences widely held the name, Theda Bara, to be an anagram of the evocative words 'death' and 'arab'. The key to stardom, suggests Walker, lies in a player's ability (and the ability of the system that markets him/her) to perform the image-repertoire (stage the stereotypes) of many audience members. Clearly, Fox constructed Theda Bara to respond to and reflect the sexual desires of American society.

Walker notes that with the construction of Theda Bara, Fox demonstrated two ideas. First, stars could be made without films; they could flourish using the attributes of stardom as a substitute for it. Before the release of Theda Bara's film *A Fool There Was*, Fox sent Theda Bara on a publicity tour in which she used the props of the *femme fatale* to suggest that her supernatural powers and exotic upbringing made her sexually irresistible. Later, upon release of the film, audiences read Theda's supernatural sexual magnetism as explanation for the otherwise unexplained power her film character held over lovers With this publicity tour, Fox exploited the subject constructed as Theda Bara before releasing the film. Second,

because Theda's public image transferred itself to her screen image so strongly, life did not imitate art so much as transfuse it.

Star status was measured by a player's recognition of his/her power over an audience -- his or her ability to be someone else, someone we want or need them to be. "A crystallizing moment of stardom," notes Walker,

> seems to happen when a player becomes dramatically aware of the power that he or she wields. It is not quite the same thing as 'popularity'. One can live easily with popularity. The power of stardom strikes home to an artist as a disproportion between who he thinks he is and how other people think of him. It is bewildering, exhilarating, depressing or terrifying. Chaplin knew he was immensely popular early on in his first year as a Keystone comedian, in 1914, but he did not know his power as a star till 1916 when he took the train from Los Angeles to New York and to his growing astonishment found people standing beside the line as word of his progress preceded him, packing railroad stations, feting him at every halt and finally obliging the New York chief of police to beg him to get off at 125th Street, instead of Grand Central, since the crowds waiting there for him could not be contained.[14]

For stars, being someone we, the audience, needs or wants them to be means being someone else -- being a constructed person. In his autobiography, Chaplin notes that he felt this way upon arriving in New York and reading news of himself on the electric sign in Times

Square: *Chaplin signs with Mutual at six hundred and seventy thousand a year.* "I stood and read it objectively as though it were about someone else."[15]

Players like Theda Bara or Charlie Chaplin were assimilated into the star system by stabilizing production and giving a continuity of appeal to the product. The appearance, personality, and performance of each star had to be standardized from picture to picture. The public needed to know what to expect from its favorites. "At the same time," notes Walker,

> publicity about them, their pictures, activities and off screen characteristics -- and in this respect the establishment of Hollywood as an exotic *and permanent* background played an enormous role -- could be employed to provoke curiosity, stimulate expectation and keep film goers coming back again and again. Participation in the players' identities thus took root at the same time and in the same soil as the star system.[16]

The studios' devices for constructing stars extended beyond that of ready-made personas. Under the star system, the studios often used morality clauses to control star image. These morality clauses were meant to insure that the off-screen lives of stars

would always "match" and never contradict their on-screen lives.

Photoplay reported that in 1919 Mary Miles Minter

> signed a three-and-a-half year contract with the Realart
> Company, a company [behind which] is Adolph Zukor of
> Paramount. . . . She will, for the term of her contract,
> receive 1,300,000 dollars. The pictures are to be divided
> into four groups of five, for the first five, 50,000 dollars
> each. For the second five, 70,000 dollars each, and the
> for the third five, 80,000 dollars each. But the most
> interesting part is that this contract is alleged to
> concern itself with the star's intimate life and mode of
> living. She is not to become a "public figure" except in
> the ways that Zukor evangelists direct. She can be
> interviewed seldom, if ever -- except as a part of the
> said evangelism. She must be seen very little in public, if
> at all. She is to be a real "home-body" and have an
> existence only in her work. *And she must not marry.*17

The studios assumed control over their artists' whole lives.

Personal lives, especially emotional and sexual lives which might

conflict with the public image of a star, were seen as extensions of

public lives. In the 1930s, the 'morality code', which became a

feature of contracts in the 1920s, stretched to encompass

everything that a star might do professionally or privately. Film

journalism reacted strongly to the studios' attempts to control star

identity and image so tightly. Reporters were no longer satisfied

with stories and gossip planted by the studios; entertainment news

came to rely on investigative reporting and candid photos. The

Hollywood news media focused on the 'inside dope', 'real dirt', and 'knocking' interviews. The studios' apprehension of scandal, argues Walker, bolstered the star phenomenon. Their mistrust of the press further fueled the cat-and-mouse game originally played with the secreting of picture players' names. The counter measures taken by studios trying to avoid scandal served to heighten public interest in the secrets held by studios about their favorite stars.

In his essay "Charisma," Richard Dyer explores the mythical and mystical attributes of stardom that the studios' attempts to tightly control star identity created. Drawing on Max Weber's political theory, Dyer argues that charisma combines concepts of social function with an understanding of ideology to create this kind of magic. Charisma is "a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he [sic] is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman or at least superficially exceptional qualities."[18] In these terms, Dyer considers Marilyn Monroe. Her image was situated in the flux of ideas about morality and sexuality that characterized the 1950s in America. Monroe's combination of sexuality and innocence is part of that flux; her charisma is an apparent condensation of all of that within her.

Monroe represents the kernel of ideas concerning morality and sexuality that explodes into American culture during the 1950s. Dyer notes the importance of considering two sides of star charisma: the ideological formations to which stars belong and those of audiences. For Dyer, star-audience relationships are an intensification of the conflicts and exclusions experienced by everyone. As such, star-audience relationships often occur between stars and people who experience role or identity conflict or pressure; fans are often to some degree excluded from the dominant articulation of adult, male, heterosexual culture.

While stereotyping helps to explain popularity, it does not explain the common sense notions of star and charisma like magic, power, fascination, authority, and aura. These notions depend on the degree to which stars are accepted as truly being what they appear to be: authenticity. Dyer argues that the processes of 'authentification' guarantee star 'quality'. As Dyer explains, "Authenticity is both a quality necessary to the star phenomenon to make it work, and also the quality that guarantees the authenticity of the other particular values a star embodies (such as girl-next-

door-ness, etc.). It is this effect of authenticating authenticity that gives the star charisma ....."[19]

What authenticates? Richard Sennett's book *The Fall of Public Man* charts the development of immediacy, sincerity, believability, and truth as criterion whose referent is a person's person. Are they being themselves? These criteria are the qualities of authenticity and they are essential to the development of humanism and individualism. The major trends in Western discourse (Marxism, Behaviorism, Psychoanalysis, Linguistics, etc.) that are hailed as intellectual revolutions, notes Dyer, have all worked to dislodge the security with which the individual holds his/her place as the guarantor of discourse. In addition to these discursive trends, two historical developments have endangered the notion of the individual: totalitarianism and mass media.

> What is particularly fascinating about the mass media and totalitarianism is that, even as they are being identified as destroying the individual, they are also largely in the business of promoting the individual and the claims of humanism. To get back to stars, no aspect of the media can be more obviously attended by hype than the production of stars; there is nothing sophisticated about knowing they are manufactured and promoted, it is a sense that is common. . . . Yet in the very same breath as audiences and producers alike acknowledge stars as hype, they are declaring this or that star as the genuine

article. Just as the media are construed as the very antithesis of sincerity and authenticity, they are the source for the presentation of the epitome of those qualities, the true star.[20]

Marxism, linguistics, psychoanalysis, and behaviorism displace the individual as the guarantor of discourse and posit a *real* beneath the surface represented by "the individual" as discursive category. To be authentic is to have a depth beneath the surface of the stereotyped image; the authenticity of this depth is often a measure of difference: how much does the real vary from the image? An ironic contradiction was always built into the star system: producers wanted to standardize the appeal of artists, stars wanted to demonstrate individualism and diversity. Although the studios saw this contradiction as destructive, the conflict between star persona and perceived subjectivity worked to authenticate players in the eyes of audience members. The question of a star's authenticity can be referred back to her/his existence in the real world. Authenticity is established by markers that indicate lack of control, lack of premeditation, and privacy; these markers establish a place beyond the controlled image of the star text. Features which reveal that stars are not what they appear to be reinforce their realness by

appealing to the truth behind the illusion. Industry journalism, with its reliance on "insiders," authenticates stars as it "reveals their secrets." What guarantees that someone's stardom is not a con? An authenticated individual acting as guarantor of the truth of the discourse of his/her stardom.

Hollywood initially presented stars as glamorous yet virtuous, privileged yet homely, and rich yet ordinary. Fan magazines worked to reinforce the notion that stars were just plain folks. However, by the mid to late 20s, argues Walker, fans were bored with these depictions. Fan magazines began expressing a disenchanted hostile attitude toward wealthy stars. During the 1930s, star making changed in two ways, both of which had authenticating results. As luck would have it, a technological advance, talkies, began authenticating the charismatic magic stars already possessed. Sound both humanized and democratized the stars.

> In an astonishingly short period of time, measured almost in months, the vocal proficiency, striking naturalism and strength of personality had been blended together to form the Hollywood idiom. And those who mastered it became themselves part of the American idiom -- people whom millions of film goers admired and imitated.[21]

Talkies pulled the film industry out of its slump while the studios introduced the strategic use of scandal and sensation. The studios slowly came to realize that their obsession with respectability needn't battle the fans' appetite for sensationalism.

The 1930s also introduced personal appearance tours. Stars wanted to heighten their status as house-hold names and prove their worth in popularity to the studios. This era saw no more of silence's isolating mystique that kept audiences in awe of stars, they wanted to make contact with the public and beguile it with personality. Personal appearance tours humanized stars; they facilitated stars' identification with their audiences.

> When it was all over, and if all had gone well, the audience had felt that stars were folk like themselves projecting ordinary human qualities, yet endowing them with a heightened enjoyment. The films that followed confirmed the feeling of the star as a magnified representative of the people.22

The history of stardom demonstrates that stars never occurred naturally, as if the magic of talent simply propelled the predetermined few into the limelight. Although the requisite ingredients have changed over the years, stars have always been a construct and audiences are hip to this situation. Zine writers

exploit this knowledge by inserting themselves, their desires and imaginations, into the star construct. Playing with this construct allows fan writers a means of expressing the social construction of their own identities and of continually reconstructing their identities just as do stars. The star phenomenon instructs in us the continual manipulation and transformation of our identities. At any moment, any of us can become someone else. As Dyer suggests, the concept of authentication values and validates the simultaneous existence of contradictory selves. For today's audiences, to be conflicted and contradictory is to be real. Today's stars embody this conflictual mode in a way no other era has seen. Zin/ography occurs at the intersection of these conflictual identities, providing a mode of writing that sustains such identities.

In the post-war years, argues Walker, changes took place in American society which violently disturbed the relationship between stars and audience. The separation between star and audience identity began to break down and mesh. The zine phenomenon flourishes under and testifies to this condition. Hitherto, stars had set goals and images for society; now the part of society that goes to pictures sets the styles for its stars. The film audience of the

1960s turned to stars to define the counter-culture. They desired stars whose off-screen lives and on-screen roles corresponded to the confusion, vulnerability, rebellion, alienation, and anarchism of that cultural moment. The star had "in fact become a superfan. Instead of being worshipped for himself, it is he who worships the values of his followers."[23]   The post-war stars, suggest Walker, were life-style stars. The audience no longer wants to have its needs fulfilled by an actor's personality, but needs to have its way of life defined by a star's interpretation of it. "The members of this audience do not want film stars who embody their dreams: they go for stars who provide sanctions for their own behavior, attitudes and philosophy."[24]   The film going audience changed from that of the studio era. During the studio era the audience used to be based on the wide spread of middle age, middle income, and middle class values; it liked stars to embody appropriate qualities and to have instantly recognizable traits that did not vary greatly from one picture to the next. The post-war audience was younger and more complex; it was apathetic to the whole idea of movie stars as creators of a separate breed or more mysterious charisma than other mass media stars who project immediacy and intimacy.

Andrew Goodwin addresses this widening of the arena of stardom in his book *Dancing in the Distraction Factory.* Unlike the stars of the early Hollywood system, today's media stars maintain complex often contradictory identities. Goodwin argues that it is most useful to think of the star not as individual, but as text. He locates media interviews, imagery, on-stage performances, iconography, direct address, and critical commentary as the sites of star-text construction. Unlike DeCordova, Walker, and Dyer whose interests focus mainly on the Hollywood system and its star machine, Gordon investigates pop music stars. He argues that star loyalty is a key element in the music industry's effort to rationalize the impossible task of predicting public taste. The more ways in which various people with various interests and experiences have to identify with a star text (the more points of identification a star text touches) the more people and groups of people can identify with that text. Some of today's most popular star texts (like that of Madonna or Elvis) which sustain multiply conflicted identities imply an authenticity that flatter, more one dimensional stars cannot. How is this so? Richard Dyer explains in his article "*A Star Is Born* and the Construction of Authenticity."[25] Stars attain popularity,

suggests Dyer, through the stereotyping of their image; this stereotyping gives star images social resonance. Stereotyping situates stars in the wider cultural discourse and allows stars to speak to the different concerns of different audiences. By diversifying the image-repertoire of a star, the music industry insures more star loyalty. The more personas a star maintains, the larger his or her share of the fan market. For instance, as long as I understand Courtney Love to be one of the few radical feminist artists available for consumption, I remain loyal to her and continue to buy her products. Another fan, however, might remain loyal to Hole (Courtney Love's band) because s/he understands it to be a great punk band. In this way, the star construct Courtney Love/Hole maintains fan loyalty from record to record. Star loyalty results from an audience identification with the star text. Without even hearing the latest release, we buy it. The persona or star text attaches additional meanings or second-level use values (radical feminist, punk) to popular texts thereby increasing the chances that audiences will identify with certain texts.

Fan writers stand in relationship to the constructedness of star identities. As a form of writing, zines allow writers to express

the social construction of their identities as they see them reflected in media stars. Academic writing, however, maintains a radically different agenda. In direct opposition, academic writing strives to suppress multiple selves in favor of soliciting the unified humanist subject. In this way, the subject of academic writing is radically different from the subject of zine writing.

The Subject of Academic Writing

Compare cultural studies' conception of the subject to that assumed by academic writing. In his book, *Fragments of Rationality: Postmodernity and the Subject of Composition*, Lester Faigley argues that for many years, American writing instruction was linked to the large cultural goal of subject formation. Literacy instruction taught students more than how to write, it taught them who they were to be. Because academic writing has traditionally and historically functioned as argument, it worked to solicit the student writer into a rational consciousness. With the emergence of composition studies in the 1960s, however, a questioning of the subjectivity of the writer arose. Along with theory in other disciplines, composition

theory began to radically interrogate the assumed rationality of the writer. Yet in the midst of this theoretical shift, Faigley notes that the institutional practices of schooling remain quite unchanged.

Richard Ohmann analyzes these institutional practices with his survey of fourteen composition textbooks. In *English In America: A Radical View of the Profession* Ohmann argues that composition textbooks work to reproduce the rational, autonomous subject for political, social, and economic purposes. From his research, Ohmann concludes that writing is generally taught as "a series of routines" which "divorce writing from society, need, and conflict."[26] Writing is both taken out of and directed away from social life. Faigley argues that this push toward rationality is not the work of textbooks alone, but rather that it is imbedded in a long history of institutional practices and discourses. For instance, the disciplinary regime of composition studies involves the preservation of a rational subject through its writing pedagogy. In spite of certain changes, even radical theoretical changes, many of the minute practices of composition studies that work to construct a rational subject have remained in place.

Ohmann argues that a pseudo-politics runs through the ideas of writing presented in freshman English textbooks. This pseudo-politics lays claim to objectivity. "The writer" these books posit works in the interest of truth and general welfare; economic and social afflictions do not influence him/her. In the world these books assume, social choices are made by rational debate in which all people have an equal voice. Choice is determined by the cooperative action of all participants while power, and the relations between ideas and material circumstances, are ignored. Ohmann's analysis suggests that the ideal language of freshman composition holds action and conflict at a distance.

How did freshman composition come to be conducted in this way? In the chapter "Freshman Composition and Administered Thought," Ohmann points out that in the modern university (as opposed to the old aristocratic college) English composition was intended to train American professional and managerial elites. Historically, the course has had a double focus: select those who display the verbal signs of the governing class and teach them the verbal skills necessary for governing. While this double focus was blurred by other ideals (such as introducing students to literary

culture, teaching the principles of rhetoric, or fighting corruption in thought and language), Ohmann suggests that the way we present composition to students still "has something important to do with how America does politics and makes decisions."[27] Writing well helps students succeed in college not because it teaches students to be critical and creative, but because it teaches them to be of service, docile, and limited. Students approach composition classes as time to be served; composition classes reinforce this expectation with their focus on tasks like number of words or pages to be written.

Freshman composition, of course, has seen dramatic changes. Yet, Ohmann wishes to consider the assumptions that remain constant to method and style despite the varied history of the course. He begins with two guiding questions: to what extent is our work in composition governed by social needs and cultural assumptions and what do textbook authors propose to do for students?

Generally, the fourteen textbooks in Ohmann's survey propose to improve student's writing. This aim is universally stated; writing is not presented as specific to its circumstances but is rather

presented as Writing, a generalized competence that can be applied
to a variety of situations. In these textbooks, "the" student who
writes is anyone. "'The' student," argues Ohmann, "... is defined only
by studenthood, not by any other attributes. He is classless, sexless
though generically male, timeless. The authors assume that writing
is a socially neutral skill, to be applied in and after college for the
general welfare."[28] Writing is not allied with any particular social
end or group of users; it is directed toward the individual student
who is abstracted from society.

Ohmann argues that students often approach composition
courses as a matter of serving time because textbooks address the
students as a homogenized mass of individuals. By "abstracting 'the'
student away from society and history, and in treating composition
as an activity apart from politics, the textbooks very narrowly fix
the students' imagined circumstances and the possibilities for action
there."[29] Whereas these textbooks imagine the student to be
someone who is being trained to take up a place in society, a free
citizen, they do not see him/her as being in society *now*. The student
assumed by traditional composition textbooks is far from socially
constructed; s/he is in fact culturally void. "They see him," argues

Ohmann "as newborn, unformed, without social origins and without needs that would spring from his origins. He has no history. Hence the writing he does and the skills he acquires are detached from those parts of himself not encompassed by his new identity as a *student.*"[30] This student of composition is conceived of as an individual who acts outside of time and history; s/he acts alone, never with others for a common purpose. S/he has a past, but no history; that is, s/he has accumulated unconnected and unpatterned experiences. These experiences neither connect with one another nor with what the student does next. This approach "individuates the student, dividing her experience from that of other people and asking her to find what is most personal in it. She is to cultivate uniqueness."[31] Textbooks generally ignore the social context or the politics of style and instead assume that style comes from the unique individual psyche. They fail to open up the possibilities of style rising out of difference or alterity (such as race, class, or gender) so richly developed in recent critical discourse. For Ohmann, the condescending tone of textbooks testifies to the alienation (a separation from one's self, estrangement from the fruits of one's work, and powerlessness) produced by these assumptions.

Keeping with their ahistorical bent, freshman English textbooks place argument in an idealized setting; they see rational persuasion as almost the sole means by which people change people. This type of persuasion is limited to a shoring up of propositions with the right kinds of support; it depends on lifting the dynamic of argument out of the lines of arguer and audience. "Generally," writes Ohmann "they envision no prior alignment of people and forces in society that cannot be overcome by a well-conducted argument; and, if they do, they put it under the rubric of 'closed minds', regrettably beyond the reach of argument."[32] Ohmann is careful to point out that although the ideas concerning argument presented in these textbooks are not wrong, their appeal to abstract rationality presents a naive view of how minds are changed:

> I don't deny that rational argument plays a role in changing minds; obviously it does. But to understand how it does, and within what limits, one must surely consider how the ideas people have relate to the ideas they *need* to have, not because of logic but because of their material and social circumstances. Argument divorced from power, money, social conflict, class and consciousness is pseudoargument. . . .
>
> The study of abstractly rational persuasion (a) plays down materially rooted conflict of interest, (b) supports the ideology of the open society with decisions democratically and rationally made by citizens all of

whose arguments have equal chance of success, and (c) trains students to be skillful at putting into a standard and 'objective' form arguments in which they have no great personal stake -- arguments, in fact, that someone else may have required them to construct.[33]

In the textbook world, ideas that come from nowhere interact in arguments; if they are arranged correctly, they change people's minds.

To understand better specifically how the rational subject is formed and replicated, consider the sections of mainstream rhetorics (such as *The St. Martins Guide* or *Writing With a Purpose*, two of the most popular textbooks) that teach clarity and coherence. Ohmann notes that instructions that demand students to use 'definite, specific concrete language' push student writers toward language use which reproduces immediate experience and away from language that might be used to transform and understand that experience or relate it to others. Such instructions clearly have ideological consequences as clarity and coherence both work to minimize conflict. The controlling topic sentence functions similarly. Rhetorics often call on students to use language that allows them to express unique selfhood. Such an expression indicates that s/he is a sincere and purposeful writer. Faigley

argues that "the notion that the student writer is a rational, coherent, and unitary individual"[34] follows from the assumption of purpose.

Prescribed behaviors such as focus, purpose, and objectivity not only make the student writer appear to be a rational subject, they also supply the writer with confidence in his/her own rationality. Even those textbooks which conceive of writing as aimed at self-discovery do so in order that the writer might then be able to move outside the self; this approach teaches the writer how to objectify him/herself. And, when textbooks address uses of literacy for social or personal ends in society, they do so to improve a student's ability to function as an individual -- because democracy depends on the idea of independent, objective, rational thinking. "The authors," asserts Ohmann "see their craft functioning within the status quo. They see the users of that craft as pursuing mainly individual goals against an unchanging social backdrop."[35] Because the textbooks operate without an analysis of politics and literacy in a technological society, students are imagined as undifferentiated.

Faigley notes that even "personal disclosure" narratives, which seem to challenge rational subjectivity (by approaching emotional

excess), are managed by requiring emotional distance. These autobiographical essays not only assume that individuals possess an identifiable "true" self and that the true self can be expressed in discourse, they also assure the reproduction of this concept of self. The student selves that academic writing allows us to encounter are selves that achieve rationality and unity by characterizing former selves as *objects* for analysis. The student writer's skill in representing his/her life experiences as complete and noncontradictory is taken as confirmation that the rational subjectivity of the author is identical with the autonomous individual.

Furthermore, according to the authors of *The St. Martins Guide*, the significance of the personal disclosure narrative is in locating the "universal experiences of humanity."[36] Although these traditional rhetorics now encourage students to write about controversial social issues, they moderate responses to these issues with practices like "emotional distance" which is achieved by employing "a reasonable tone."[37] When instructed to write about controversial social issues, student writers are instructed to present both sides of the issue objectively in order to locate the

universal human value that underlies the dispute. This push for objectivity does not encourage students to question or examine the assumption that they are rational subjects, instead, it aims for the presentation of self as reasonable, authoritative, and objective.

Postmodern theories of subjectivity, however, question the existence of a rational coherent self and the ability of the self to have privileged insight into its own processes. The emphasis of assignments that produce academic writing is on writing about unified and rationalized past experiences rather than confronting the contradictions of present experience. Schooling has neglected to adapt its methodologies to the postmodern theories of discipline studies; the two domains are at odds with one another. Faigley notes that "to ask students to write authentically about the self assumes that a unified consciousness can be laid out on the page. That the self is constructed in socially and historically specific discursive practices is denied."[38] Zin/ography suggests an alternative writing practice to the autobiographical essay of composition studies. This alternative method deploys a postmodern theory of subjectivity through a writing practice by asking: if identity is constructed in social training, is it possible to learn how to intervene in this

process? Ohmann closes this chapter by asking a question important

to the project at hand:

> How would we write our composition manuals to escape
> this kind of criticism? Each book would have to define
> its audience in quite unaccustomed terms: working class
> black students, upper middle-class white students
> heading for the professions, etc. Each book would have a
> clear social aim, with a twofold job of raising social and
> rhetorical awareness (theory) and teaching composition
> as social and political practice, seeing the English
> classroom and the university as arenas of struggle.[39]

Inventing Zin/ography invents an answer to Ohmann's closing

question with two experimental fields: the practice of zine writing

and a theory of what to do with such identification, *A Lover's*

Discourse. This project develops a writing pedagogy which accounts

for the socially constructed subject of cultural studies; it uses

fanzines as one means for doing so in part because of the kind of

subject zines stage.

Zine Subjectivity

In what could be read as a response to Ohmann's call for an

alternative kind of writing, Judith Williamson proposes the fanzine

as a mode of writing which escapes the distanced, disinterested

criticism of academic writing. Her discussion, "Engaging Resistant Writers Through Zines in the Classroom," articulates the ways in which zines prompted her to reconsider the subject positions of student writers in the classroom. Noting that student writers are often put off by and uninterested in classroom writing assignments, Williamson suggests that such uninterest is a form of resistance. Students are often uninterested not only because academic writing solicits a disinterested subjectivity but also because classroom writing assignments have little if nothing to do with their particular interests. As Ohmann notes, academic writing is usually taken out of and directed away from the specific experiences of social life. In some instances, argues Williamson, student uninterest indicates a social and political resistance to the particularly sterile way in which writing instruction is institutionalized in American culture. That is, student uninterest is evidence of the problems articulated by Ohmann.

Williamson opens her discussion of these problems with an anecdote concerning her son's recent dismissal from his "Writing Center." Although uninterested in his classroom experiences with

writing, Williamson's son and his friends were quite interested in publishing their own zine. She offers the following account:

> I was depressed that with all the promise these young writers held, they were miserable in their English classes, put off by sentences they had to diagram. As I observed the social practices of zine-writing, I kept wondering what would happen if students were encouraged to work on zine projects in their English classrooms. Zines seemed to offer one creative solution for getting students to engage in substantial writing projects. Zines would offer opportunities for writers to invest themselves in their writing, to discover the power of self-motivation.[40]

While proposing to offer a chance to learn about writing while writing, talking about writing, getting feedback, and rewriting in a comfortable non-threatening environment, her son's English class had really focused on high standards, working up to par, and risking dismissal for not meeting expectations. This course refused to account for student interest and instead focused solely on 'The Research Paper'. Zine writing impresses Williamson because in it she sees fulfilled the failed promises of her son's English class.

Whereas school failed to engage Williamson's son and his friends in writing, zines succeeded. Why might this be so? Williamson argues that "zines offer a lens through which student writers can examine and practice resistances."[41] Borrowing a

distinction from John Timber's text *College English*, Williamson uses the term "resistance" to refer to two different modes: students who are reluctant, based on social position, to question authority and students who elicit counter-readings of the codes and practices of dominant culture. Zines offer opportunities to engage resistant students as well as those who need to learn how to resist because they offer students a way to contextualize literacy itself as a social and political construct.

> Zines are to literature what off-off-off Broadway is to theater in New York, avant garde and about as non-canonical as you can get. They invite strong responses to both words and graphics, and because they are often controversial, zines provide a way to raise social consciousness and ask questions which require students to think critically about power relationships between dominant and sub-cultural groups for example.[42]

Unlike academic writing, which solicits an autonomous rational subject who is completely individualized, zine writing encourages writers to stage themselves as socially constructed subjects.

How does a person or a group of people come to write a zine on a specific subject or series of subjects? In his book *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture*, Jenkins explains that media viewers become media fans when they are able to draw

media texts into the realm of their lived experiences. "The difference between watching a series and becoming a fan lies in the intensity of their emotional and intellectual involvement."[43] Fan writing articulates the process by which program information gets inserted into ongoing social interactions. Williamson's account of her son's experience indicates that this process is generalizable beyond media fandom. While Williamson's son is not a media fan, per se, he and his friends write their zine around the topics that interest them; that is, those topics which already constitute their ongoing social interactions or their identifications. "Through their zines, they were able to write about what was important to them which happened to be music, animal rights, vegetarianism, and anarchy among other topics."[44] Williamson suggests in fact that it is academic writing's suppression of identification, its indifference, which bores and thus fails her son; fan writing, because it solicits writing with identification, involves her son both emotionally and intellectually.

Because zines "can be about anything at all that interests its writers and readers,"[45] zines are a site for postmodern *bricolage* and

participatory culture. Compared to the distanced disengaged pedagogy of most composition textbooks, zines offer a resistant space to that of academic writing because they are characterized by multiple layers of graphics and text which are often verbally and visually shocking. And yet, the social process of constructing a zine often results in the kind of collaboration often theorized, yet rarely realized, by composition studies. While observing the construction of her son's zine, Williamson realized that he and his friends

> were informally holding their own writer's workshop, serving as readers for each other and providing each other with the support and encouragement they weren't getting in their English classrooms. Through their zines, they were able to write about what was important to them which happened to be music, animal rights, vegetarianism, and anarchy among other topics. They tried out radical voices, thoughtful voices, humorous voices, constructing arguments to defend their points of view, their tasks simultaneously editorial, artistic and political. They wrote with an awareness of audience, taking stands on real issues, blending verbal and visual texts. I watched the zine writers use many other writerly behaviors including problem-solving techniques that could only have grown out of critical thought. They thought through the economics and the logistics of publication and the politics of publishing. The zine writers' enthusiasm and attention to detail with their work provided a sharp contrast to their boredom with school.[46]

Zines, notes Williamson, are pedagogically useful beyond their ability to solicit socially constructed subjectivities. Because most zines are low budget publications, they are easy to manage as cooperative classroom projects. These texts often respond to popular culture; they are thus appealing to students; finding a topic is not difficult. Because zines are participatory in nature and because they offer blurred boundaries between readers and writers, they offer sites for reader/writer connections. "Both print and electronic zines can be flexible and responsive to a variety of rhetorical situations. Whether they're Whitman or Shakespeare zines, radical lesbian zines, or fan-zines, what seems to matter most is the blurring of boundaries between graphics and text, the ease of self-publication and the heteroglossic quality of writers' voices."[47] Zines practice many of the theories currently offered by composition studies, particularly as this discipline shifts its thinking to accommodate electronic literacy. In effect, Williamson's discussion entails an attempt to bridge the gap between the humanist subject solicited by academic writing (what she calls "classroom" writing) and the socially constructed subject theorized by cultural studies (that is, the one present in our classrooms).

Although she recognizes that zines are hardly a panacea for all educational problems, Williamson concludes by suggesting that zines might indeed provide a much needed alternative to what she calls "classroom" writing:

> I'd encourage the timid and the bold to take a look at zines, to see what these fragmented, often visually and verbally shocking texts have to offer to students who are bored and resistant to "classroom" writing. In almost any form, zines can help a teacher decenter their classroom and make spaces for students to encounter the other and to experience their own voices.[48]

Zines, she suggests, might be adapted as a new writing practice for the social subject.

Inventing Zin/ography works from the hypothesis that the correlation between academic writing (print apparatus) and selfhood enables us to predict a relationship between electronic writing and its emerging subjectivity. I am working in this speculative zone. How might education, as an institution, prepare people to deal effectively with the subjectivity solicited by these new electronic tools? *Inventing Zin/ography* responds by designing a specific practice for the electronic apparatus. This practice, however, does not consider the electronic tools in isolation. They are considered in

the context in which they are most prolifically used: entertainment. The media, celebrity culture, and stars are all part of the subject formation in which zine experiments occur. The star experience stands in sharp contrast to the principle of authenticity that is the last vestige of the humanist self. Zin/ography recognizes cultural theory's implication that the experience of identity manifested in media stars is coming to everyone. Like stars, we all feel the sense of complete alienation from the individual autonomous self; we all recognize the possibility of manipulating the look or image of "self." *Inventing Zin/ography* accounts for both sides of the zine equation: star identity/fan identification, recognizing that the fan constructs identity in response to the "how-to" guide supplied by the celebrity machine.

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CHAPTER 3

GRAMMATOLOGY IN ELECTRONIC SCHOOL

Inventing Zin/ography writes a how-to book for practicing and inventing electronic literacy specifically in the context of a networked writing environment -- or the internet as writing laboratory. The question at hand: how might we adapt the current practices of academic writing from the technology of the printing press to that of the computer? For assistance in imagining such a shift, we might recall the work done in inventing television studies out of film studies. Although film studies has flourished as an academic discipline or pursuit since the 1960s, television studies, which is much younger, owes its birth to the ill-fitted attempt to apply the methods of film theory and criticism to other audio/visual media. As the collected authors of *Channels Of Discourse* point out, the mechanisms that produce and regulate the production of desire and meaning in television are quite different from those of

cinema because the apparatus of television is radically different.[1] In comparing television to cinema, we see that not only are the technology and the sites of reception different, but the way in which the apparatuses hail their spectators or viewers varies for each of these modes of electronic writing.

Just as the conditions that produce the audio/visual experience of cinema are not the same in television, neither are those that produce the textual experience in print and electronic literacies. For instance, electronic literacy combines the audio/visual experiences of television with the visual experiences of print literacy in hypermedia. The experience of reading, viewing, or listening in hypermedia is different from that of reading, viewing, or listening to a book, film, or television because the apparatuses of textual production are different. Recall the shift from film to television studies. While in some instances film theories were transferable, in others, the experiential change demanded new thinking. Such is the case involving the shift from print to electronic literacy. This shift involves not only the experiential differences wrought by the shift from the printing press as writing's technology of production, but also those wrought

by the shift from film to video to hypermedia. In fact, one way of thinking through the situation of electronic literacy is to understand it as the hybridization of alphanumeric and audio/visual technologies.

Because my approach to this project is grammatological, I assume that writing is a social machine. As a social machine, writing is made manifest by an apparatus; writing occurs within the constellation of technology, the ideology of subject formation and institutional practices. For example, where today's academic writing is concerned, the apparatus of literacy relates the technology of alphabetic literacy (print) with an ideology of the individual autonomous subject and the institutional practice of criticism. Through this constellation, the apparatus manifests academic writing in the treatise or essay. As Ulmer argues in *Teletheory*, the privileging of the essay/treatise is ideological.[2] This privilege is promoted by the relationship of print technology to the notion of the individual subject; the essay/treatise masquerades as the natural genre for critical thinking when it is but one invention of writing. The lesson to be learned in the shift from film to television studies is that the change in apparatus is crucial; the

experiential differences wrought by this change point the way toward interacting with new literacies. In this spirit, the following discussion investigates both the print and the electronic apparatuses of writing so as to trace out the changes introduced by the shift from one to the other and to begin to invent an answer to the question: how might we continue the shift from older mediums of electronic literacy such as film and video to the internet? In the sections that follow, I elucidate the differences between the practices of print literacy and the promise of electronic literacy; on its heels, chapter three takes a closer look at adapting theories of visual literacy to the work of zin/ography.

Practicing Academic Writing

Although we all 'know it when we see it', it might be useful to start with a basic description of academic writing. My copy of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* instructs students in "the logical steps in research and writing -- selecting a topic, using the library, preparing a working bibliography, taking notes, avoiding plagiarism, outlining and writing drafts."[3] Academic writing is a

stepped process which aims to present information and ideas clearly and effectively -- that is, logically. The handbook notes that this process focuses on one central idea (the thesis statement) and moves linearly and logically from one idea to the next -- all of which support the central idea (thesis). The thesis statement shapes information into a unified, coherent whole and makes sure that the writer (and by implication, the reader) knows where s/he is heading and that s/he stays on the right track. Outlining helps a writer account for all important aspects of a subject and focus on only relevant topics; the connections between ideas must be clear. The handbook instructs the writer to delete everything that is irrelevant, unimportant, or repetitive as this information weakens the paper. Related material should be brought together under general headings which are arranged so that they flow logically and linearly one from the other. Logical development, notes the handbook, may move from the general to the specific or vice-versa. To improve fluency and coherence, this handbook advises the writer to add transitions which tell the reader how one sentence or paragraph relates to another. Finally, the MLA advises the writer to monitor the degree of subjectivity used in a paper.

In his book, *Hypertext: The Convergence of Contemporary Critical Theory and Technology*, George P. Landow illuminates the history of these practices and the relationship between academic writing and print technology[4]. Print, notes Landow, has given us a conceptual system founded on the ideas of center, margin, hierarchy and linearity. These ideas are made manifest in the MLA's push toward a unified coherent whole which stays on track. Off-track or marginal ideas are deleted. Effective argumentation requires closure and the abandoning of certain lines of investigation in the pursuit of unity and coherence. Academic writing is structured by a numerating linear logic which is made comprehensible by the features of print technology such as pagination, indices, and bibliographies. These features not only increase the speed of information processing and retrieval, they also make scholarship possible.

In *Rhetoric and Irony: Western Literacy and Western Lies*, C. Jan Swearingen suggests that the hallmarks of scholarship and Western thought such as critical distance, objectivity, command over abstractions, generalizations and logic were invented in ancient Greece. Whereas grammatological research reveals that

print technology transformed writing practices into a series of strict rules, the tendencies and characteristics of academic writing descend from the Greek rhetorical masters. Print technology, however, intensifies today's particular version of academic writing. Today's writing practices, argues Swearingen, are actually abstract manifestations of ancient methods.

> *What* is read and known, tolerated and valued -- the canon -- undergoes changes from period to period, but what is *done* with what is read and known in the schools follows an increasingly abstracted and codified congregation of methods: definition, narration, description, analysis, predication, linear exposition, and logico-argumentative proof.5

To begin to understand this situation, we must recall the history and function of these abstracted and codified methods. The grammar, rules for predication, and conventions of expository argumentation by which most academic writing is conducted are descendants of Aristotelian terms and methods. Considering rhetoric a science, Aristotle established a series of rules or laws by which argumentation could be practiced. Imparted by Aristotelian conceptualizations of logic and rhetoric, the dominant linear, logical, centered system of academic writing is now completely naturalized by its pervasive institutionalization. This system

shapes the academic and literary conventions of single author and single subject work. Aristotelian logic not only fosters today's highly schematic and analytic logic, but also its formulaic rhetorics, and the compartmentalization of subjects. Aristotle explicates these conventions in the *Rhetoric* by presenting taxonomies and lists of logical structures as well as lists of the modes of persuasion. These modes help to direct the choice of subjects and arguments; they include the speaker's apparent character (*ethos*), the moving or changing of the audience's mental attitudes (*pathos*), and the logical or apparently logical treatment of the subject (*logos*). The *Rhetoric* goes on to direct the reader in lines of reasoning, treatments of style, and delivery of words and phrases all of which control the appearance of character.

The characteristics of academic writing described by the MLA handbook derive from the humanities' attempt to operate like a science rather than an art. Borrowed from Aristotle's departmentalized sciences, today's academic writing practices represent the humanities' assimilation of empiricism. Academic writing, imagined to function like scientific proof, tangos between problem and solution; eliminating all random variables, it traces a

line through a body of information. Like the repeatable (and hence 'true' or correct) scientific experiment, argumentative writing is designed to produce one predictable effect. Consider these common practices and characteristics:

1. Logical -- Academic writing masquerades as scientific proof by allowing its reader to *witness in absentia*; that is, to witness the proof of the thing without being there for actual verification. Logical argumentative proof demonstrates the 'truth' of the highly abstracted analytic reasoning of academic writing for the reader by creating the illusion of seeing the proof. Such illusions are created through *logos*. Standard writing books instruct that there are two forms of *logos* which derive from Aristotelian logic: induction and deduction. Logic, for writers, is largely a matter of being able to substantiate inferences drawn from facts which are supported by other inferences drawn from other facts or general principles. Inductive reasoning starts with observations of details and ends with general conclusions; that is, induction reasons from particulars to general truths. Deductive reasoning works the other way round.

Deduction starts with general knowledge and from there predicts a specific observation.

As Eugene R. Hammond instructs in his book *Teaching Writing*, reasons, evidence, facts, and explanations of cause and effect relationships are the building blocks of strong arguments.[6] The more facts and general principles an argument covers, the less vulnerable (i.e., the more persuasive or convincing) it is. *Logos* is so highly valued that writers also employ *pathos* and *ethos* in such ways that they are made to masquerade as *logos*. In an attempt to help writers monitor the amount of subjectivity they include in their writing, Hammond suggests that writing teachers encourage inductive reasoning as it attracts attention to the facts and not to the writer. This mode of reasoning arouses less envy, threatens opponents far less, is more polite, and is less easily ignored.

2.Linearity -- By tracing a *line* of argument through a body of information, the academic writer can clearly demonstrate the proof of his/her argument while insuring the reader's arrival at the one (desired) predictable outcome; the visual representation or spatial layout of print on a page reinforces this characteristic. For

instance, paragraphing imposes a linear sequence on the reading process; the paragraph directs the reader's attention through and asks the reader to think about what has been said thus far before proceeding. Pagination also directs a reader linearly through a text. Repetition, however, irritates rather than persuades the reader. The reader, Hammond suggests, wants to read facts, reason, and evidence either inductively or deductively; both are linear forms of logic.

3. Centered -- Because extraneous ideas might distract the reader from the argument at hand and thereby risk losing the reader, argumentative writing remains centered or focused on one idea. Centering helps the writer avoid ambiguity by anchoring meaning; it directs the reader's evaluation of what is an important consideration and what is not. The reader is encouraged to focus only on the writer's point of view; centering discourages him/her from considering other ideas, lines of thought, or tangents. Print technology allows for closer inspection and reinspection of the argument (as it is fixed in time and space) and thus reveals distracting tangents as fallacious attempts at manipulation.

Academic writing furthers the illusion that the reader is observing proof of its argument via attention to detail. By centering of the line of discourse, the writer once again encourages the reader to feel that s/he is witnessing proof of the argument no matter where s/he is. In this context, centering the discourse of academic writing provides a manageable means of dealing with highly abstracted thinking by creating the illusion that the reader is merely talking to him/herself. Single authorship and continuity supplement this function by protecting the illusion of realism.

4. Hierarchy -- Hierarchical page layout, like linearity, represents to the reader the power relationships between main text and notes. Information that may or may not be relevant (depending on reader's apriori knowledge of a subject) is separated from the main text and relegated to notes. The hierarchy of main text to notes also furthers the powerful effects of centering.

5. Distanced -- Because a writer always reveals him/herself when s/he writes, s/he needs to concentrate on constructing a trustworthy *ethos*, writer's image, or professional presentation.

Modeled on the sciences, a trustworthy writer is one who appears to be objective or unbiased; thus a trustworthy writer maintains a certain critical distance. By effacing the writer from the writing, critical distance creates the illusion of objectivity and impartiality; such distance suggests to the reader that the information presented is Truth (or fact) rather than opinion. As Hammond notes, to eliminate voice is to achieve objectivity because a writer's distinctive voice detracts from his/her reliability.

Pathos, a writer's use of his/her sense of audience, can also be used to construct a sense of critical distance. Most writing books advise students to minimize the possibility of stirring up violent emotions in the reader. Deploying *pathos* through the use of proper grammar and punctuation, however, is encouraged as such usage puts the reader at ease. Also, misuse of grammar and punctuation destroys the writer's *ethos* or reliability (because, if s/he doesn't know to use proper grammar and punctuation -- tasks which are considered easy -- s/he may not know anything else).

6. Coverage -- In argumentative writing, coverage creates the illusion that all variables have been investigated or tested; for the

humanities, this illusion translates into appeals to authority and precedent as means of early defense. Hammond suggests that successful writers appear to be trustworthy because they take care to substantiate all claims and because they take into account the potential reader's emotions. The successful writer covers each of the Aristotelian modes (*ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos*) in an attempt to direct the reader's thinking.

Print Literacy

These six practices work together with print technology to create the general effect that academic writing represents a kind of scientific knowledge. This representation is print literacy. The uniformity and repeatability of print reinforce critical distance by creating the impression that academic writing is independent and unaffected by human agency. Skepticism, a standing back and looking at, separates the knower from the known. This objectification of knowledge severs the knower from the known and constitutes the known as an object. Thus, critical distance simulates analytic reflection. The written code also constructs a

positioning of the self in relation to others. For instance, science and the scientific mode of writing demand an impersonality which foregrounds 'topic' and backgrounds 'writer/subject'. By effacing human subjects, the 'objective' science mode of academic writing focuses on the objects of attention through rhetorical devices such as the 'If ... then' hypothesis and agentless prose. In *Social Semiotics*, Robert Hodge and Gunter Kress argue that

> the possibility of assuming that position (of detached observer/recorder) has important consequences for the writer as subject, who need not be involved, who can be and is 'objective' and distanced. The requirements of the topic, the issue at hand, have become foremost. This kind of impersonality is what is demanded by science and the scientific mode.[7]

Such writing carefully constructs the writer's place as non-existent; the goal is to create the impression that anyone could have authored such writing, thus the writing is objective rather than subjective. For academic writing, the text-object is the all important thing; student writers must carefully learn to efface themselves from the text.

With the introduction of printing, the Aristotelian conventions of writing become even more abstract. It is through this process of further abstraction that we inherit the highly codified version of

academic writing we know today. Grammatologists such as Marshal McLuhan and Walter Ong argue that print education fosters an abstraction of self through introspection and individualism. Because print stresses a fixed point of view for the independent reader, it promotes the idea of individualism. Without a fixed technology of writing, consciousness would not have reached the highly interiorized stages we now know. Reading and writing, as a kind of consciousness raising, foster the kinds of analytic production of knowledge upon which today's academy is founded. Without this highly developed form of introspection, dissertations are an impossibility. Print technology stands in direct relationship to the ideology of the individual who, as an autonomous subject of knowledge, is self-conscious and capable of rational decisions. As such, the practice of critique is the practice of distance and rigor which is manufactured in the treatise or essay and, what is often considered "scientific" or "objective" is no more than the adoption of rhetorical codes and established approaches to composition (i.e., ideology). Seen in this light, "scholarly" is no more than a normative term which stands for a certain set of rules or a system of academic validation.

Ground from this material, "the lenses of our scholarly spectacles have fostered myopia," notes Swearingen, "'rigor' has obscured simultaneities by insisting on focus -- on one subject or issue -- as subjects or issues are divided into fields and subdivisions."[8]   Aristotle's rhetoric, logic, and formalized thesis-proof mode insure a separation of subject from subject and person from person.   Hence the charge that academic writing is masculinist and patriarchal.   By repressing the personal, the subjective and by banishing the multiple and the connected in favor of the singular, the linear, and the objective, academic writing reflects patriarchal power structures and male socialization.   Modeled on the paradigm of patriarchal power, the scholarly dictums of specificity and thoroughness have made it difficult to consider investigating multiple points of intersection.   For instance, Hammond argues that the common ways of organizing material work effectively in writing because they are the *natural* patterns with which we think.   We perceive such writing as *naturally* systematic.   For the purposes of this project, however, I suggest that because of its ideological nature, we are made to believe that the Aristotelian model is the natural model and hence the only model for academic writing.

The structure of main text to notes and indices reveals the power relationship that exists between 'authors' (or more precisely, between authors and editors). "The Author" of a work arranges his (gender intentional) ideas in larger print at the center of the page. The work of other authors or editors is relegated to smaller print and arranged either at the bottom of the page or on pages which follow the main text; such an arrangement encourages readers to view this other writing as less important (hence my students' desire to skip these notes). The fixity of print suggests that power lies with writers who are autonomous individuals, not readers. This feature of print literacy encourages the concept that writing and ideas are property to be possessed. The author/owner maintains rights over the use of that property;s/he guards its uniqueness. Academic writing engenders these notions of authorial property and authorial uniqueness because printing is costly and labor-intensive. Furthermore, the concept of plagiarism clearly establishes the boundary and difference between reader and writer. In *Singular Texts/Plural Authors: Perspectives on Collaborative Writing*, Lisa Ede and Andrea Lunsford argue that the assumptions that writing is inherently a solitary individual act and that the written idea is

intellectual property suggest a traditional patriarchal construction of authorship and authority.[9]   As intellectual property, the written idea masquerades as independent agent when in actuality, scholarly articles situate themselves within a field of relations.   The print medium, however, keeps these connections out of site because the referenced materials are often spatially distant from the references to them.

Hodge and Kress argue that school's meticulous attention to and control over the 'correct' forms of production and reproduction of cultural meanings distinguishes it as a site for the semiotic processing of subjects.   Through this processing, students learn that 'production' is highly valued over reproduction; production means control, mastery, and authenticity.   It is the paradox of education, however, that the most valued student writer is the one who most accurately reproduces the 'correct' forms of academic writing and is thus constrained and confined to reproduction whereas the least valued student writer is the most active and productive text-maker. In representing itself, education projects a contradictory message about creativity and constraint.   In print education, learning focuses on verification.   We test students to verify whether or not they have

assimilated the information stored in books. The mode of academic writing described above asks students to demonstrate through the logic of cause and effect argumentation what is already known rather than to invent something new. Composition courses verify students' knowledge of the poetics of academic writing by testing their mimicry of argumentative essays. Because print education is organized around the drive towards verification, teachers as writers are configured as the ones who know while students as readers are conceived as receptacles of knowledge. Our relationships to language are configured as either reader *or* writer. Students learn to write critical essays, but not how to produce the theories on which the humanities bases such criticism. Print education works with the product of the reasoning process while ignoring the process itself and thereby effectively suppresses other ways of learning. Because it focuses mostly on the problem of creating and disseminating static and unchangeable records of language, print education is directive rather than inventive; it reasons with a linear cause-and-effect logic, rather than an associative analogic.

As Hodge and Kress demonstrate, although the thinking of contemporary criticism in the humanities marks a departure from the thinking of traditional (or prestructuralist) criticism, the performance or presentation of it does not. The institutional practice of contemporary criticism in writing, its design, remains the same as that of traditional criticism -- a situation that seems odd, at best, given the radical epistemological differences between the two approaches. Consider the theoretical split between traditional and contemporary criticism:

Traditional	Contemporary
the object of study is considered to be a unified work	the 'object of study' is considered to be a text; that is, an intersection of a complex web of codes and conventions
emphasizes the autonomy of the art work	foregrounds relationships between texts and the conventions underlying specific textual practices

artist centered

foregrounds the contexts within which authorship occurs and the forces that circumscribe it

looks to great art to reveal enduring truths about the world

considers the worlds worlds constructed within texts

conceives of meaning as a property of an art work of an art work

views meaning as the product of the engagement of a text by a reader or by groups of readers

functions to establish what a work means, to separate literature from non-literature, and to erect a hierarchy of great works means, to separate literature from non-literature, and to erect a hierarchy of great works

examines criteria by which those in a position to define literature make which determinations and expands the scope of greatness amond works in literary studies to include both non-literature and critical discourse about texts

If contemporary criticism questions the premises and theoretical methods of traditional criticism so radically, why do the methods of presentation or the practice of writing contemporary criticism, which I would argue serve to reinforce the thinking of traditional

criticism, remain the same? Why is the disciplinary shift to contemporary criticism institutionalized by school with the same abstract and codified methods developed by the ancient Greeks?

The charge that academic writing is patriarchal and masculinist issues forth from the controlling characteristics listed above. As Hodge and Kress note, these qualities strive to suppress difference and promote sameness in an attempt to appear objective and rational. The institutionalization of these characteristics results in their conversion to Law. As the Aristotelian logic of academic writing becomes too restrictive or overly abstract, however, it prompts revolt. Swearingen argues that literacy is in a state of crisis which may be viewed as a turning point in (rather than as the latest downfall of) Western civilization; it is as a turning point that this crisis both attracts and demands our attention. Acknowledging the powerful pervasiveness of the ideological positioning of academic writing , Hodge and Kress assert that

> it is essential to understand how consumers/readers are
> positioned as a result of their entry into semiosis:
> ranging from fully aware readers who are able to

> (re)construct texts for their own purposes, to readers
> who are relatively at the mercy of the text's positioning
> of its readers.[10]

Readers who (re)construct texts practice an alternative to academic writing. As we shall see in chapter four, fan writers are amateur writers who are highly skilled at (re)constructing texts for their own purposes. By appropriating practices from fan writing, zin/ography teaches student writers (who literally are amateur writers) such skills in the interest of puzzling out a question: if the practice of writing is a key stage in the ideological formation of all individuals in contemporary society (as grammatologists have extensively argued) might different practices of writing effect different ideological formations?

Electronic literacy will not emerge automatically because of a shift in technology. As the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*[12] demonstrates, the discipline currently sees computer literacy as a faster, more efficient version of print literacy. The handbook's section "Using a Word Processor" focuses on using the

computer to copy, merge and delete files in the interest of increasing accuracy and efficiency. Such an approach fails to understand academic writing as a form of literacy and thus as a social machine. I propose that electronic school alters the configuration of the apparatus of writing. No longer is print the technology of writing, but rather computers take its place, a postmodern subject replaces the autonomous individual and thus, new institutional practices of writing need inventing. As a new technology of writing, computers suggest different practices for writing as they foreground different concepts of literacy and learning. *Inventing Zin/ography* takes electronic school, not as its object, but as its cause and accepts the challenge by inventing a new practice of writing for electronic schools.

Electronic School

Zin/ography is a method for teaching literacy in an electronic school -- a new phenomenon in education which manifests itself in the humanities as the networked writing environment (this environment exploits the tools of hypermedia, computers, and the

internet for the practice of writing). In this environment we learn, teach, study, and research electronic literacy. The pedagogical experiment zin/ography looks to these various interfaces as both archives and mediums of production. Zin/ography is concerned with electronic literacy because as computers alter the way many people read, write, and think, the nature of literacy itself undergoes crucial transformations. In homes and schools, market and workplaces, computers are reshaping the environments in which language is learned, produced, and practiced and thus the politics of literacy are shifting. "Networks," note Ann Hill Duin and Craig Hansen "provide one means of reorganizing classrooms and workplaces to situate literacy within the control of writers and workers."[12] Zin/ography practices a new cultural literacy which blurs the roles and attitudes between expert and novice, boss and worker.

Electronic school, as defined by this project, refers to a networked writing environment which uses the internet as a writing lab. The internet, an expansive network of computers originally designed by the US defense industry to decentralize operations during the Cold War, is now an international network of computers

which supports many different user interfaces. Such interfaces include, but are not limited to, e-mail, newsgroups, the World Wide Web, and MU*s. What are these interfaces? What are their characteristics? Consider the following descriptions:

1. E-mail -- modeled on a postal metaphor, electronic mail is an internet communication system which allows users to send text-based information to other users. Most e-mail exchanges use an "informal" style of writing; that is, they are modeled on the chatty discourse of personal phone calls or letters rather than the objective, staid discourse of academic writing. Articles and treatises, however, are sometimes disseminated via e-mail. Unlike phone calls, e-mail is an asynchronous form of communication; messages are stored to be read later.

2. Newsgroups -- Newsgroups, another form of asynchronous communication, are also known metaphorically as electronic bulletin boards, a description which illuminates their function. Newsgroups are usually topical, but can be visited by anyone with an internet connection who chooses to subscribe. The name of the

newsgroup itself usually describes its topic, for instance, a newsgroup called alt.fan.courtneylove focuses its discussion on Courtney Love (tangents, however, are a rule). Comments or questions which are posted to newsgroups are available for all to see and respond to, should they so choose. Every few days, overloaded newsgroups automatically purg old messages or posts.

3. World Wide Web -- The World Wide Web (or WWW) is modeled on the metaphor of a spider's web. In practice, this metaphor only fits loosely. The documents on the web are not symmetrically ordered or linked as are the threads of a spider's web. The WWW consists of many interlinked (hypertextually linked) documents which are composed of text, images (both still and moving), and/or sound. Collectively authored, the WWW is continually modified by its users who are free to construct documents and link them to various other documents on the web. The WWW, like e-mail, uses a system of addresses to link documents. Each link is not in any imaginable way like a physical link, but rather like a set of directions which tell the user's computer where to go to access a copy of the linked document. When a user activates a link on the WWW, his/her computer calls up

the address of the linked document and sends a message to that address requesting a copy of that document. The computer at that address then responds by transmitting the requested copy.

4.MU*s -- MU*s, more commonly known as MUDs or MOOs, are text-based virtual realities. Based on a spatial metaphor, MU*s provide users with landscapes and architectures for social interaction. There are two means of differentiating MUDs from MOOs: a technical means and an environmental means. For some users, MUDs differ from MOOs because they are built with different programming languages. For others, MUDs are a group of adventure-type gaming virtual realities while MOOs are a group of user-built virtual realities that do not include a scoring system. For the purposes of this project, I am only interested in MOOs as user-built virtual "spaces" because they allow users to experiment with character (each user is allowed to choose an identity in each virtual space), and community (all MOOs are social spaces in which many conversations and relationships are conducted), while scripting a text-based "reality."

In her essay "Blinding Insights: Classification Schemes and Software for Literacy Instruction," Gail E. Hawisher points out that hypertext is "not just a new software, but a new medium through which new forms of researching and learning can occur."[13] Landow characterizes this new medium as a direct response to the strengths and weaknesses of the printed book. Electronic literacy replaces the linear and fixed methods of print culture with poetic machines that work by analogy and association; unlike print literacy, electronic literacy is characterized by multilinear and multisequential reading and writing. Whereas the logic of print literacy is argumentative (inductive or deductive), the logic of electronic literacy is (like the visual literacy of film and video) associative. Electronic literacy distributes knowledge among the various connections in a network, rather than housing it within the units in that network. Knowledge resides in the links between units not in the units themselves; it is represented by the edit, the suture.[14] As such, being electronically literate requires being able to actively make and work connections, thus rendering the verification model of education, which asks students to passively recall information, powerless to teach electronic literacy. Because of its links, hypertext authoring often

requires writers to work collectively (again, more like film and video production than authoring a book). Collective authoring, because of its dialogic capabilities, proves to be an extremely fruitful way for student writers to work. An educational environment which promotes the individual and gives little instruction in group processes, however, produces students who are at odds with this form of technology. Electronic literacy calls forth another pedagogical strategy which accounts for the fact that "as students write, interpret, and negotiate texts via computer networks, they are participating within a context that promotes active learning."[15] Electronic literacy calls for *studios* rather than lectures. Because electronic literacy marks a paradigmatic shift away from conceptual systems founded on ideas of center, margin, hierarchy, and linearity towards systems based on multilinearity, nodes, links, and networks, it signals a revolution in human thought and thus has profound implications for literature, education, and the politics of knowledge. Zin/ography answers this call by appropriating techniques from art studios to the conduction of humanities classrooms.

Currently, most research on networked writing environments focuses on hypertext authoring because this interface was the first to most radically challenge the assumptions of print literacy. More recently, MOOing has attracted the attention of researchers in the humanities and composition theory. Drawn from this research, zin/ography takes MOOville and the World Wide Web as its mediums of production relying on other internet interfaces for archival research. For the purposes of this project, I use the term "electronic literacy" to refer to the *logic* of these hypermedia systems rather than to specific pieces of technology.

Recalling the practices of academic writing outlined earlier, we can elucidate more clearly the differences between print and electronic literacy. Whereas print literacy is controlled by a singular, autonomous author, electronic literacy is dialogic. As Landow explains in *Hypertext*, electronic literacy shifts control away from the writer and towards the reader by offering the reader choices about what to read when and in what sequence. In print culture these choices are made for the reader by the writer's arrangement of the text into paragraphs, pages, and chapters; electronic literacy forces the reader to choose his or her own path

through a body of information. The reader must decide which link to follow. As Jay David Bolter explains in his book *Writing Space: The Computer, Hypertext, and the History of Writing*, "In hypertexts, readers cannot avoid writing the text itself, since every choice they make is an act of writing."[16] The electronic reader is simultaneously an electronic writer because s/he is a more active decision maker.

To get a clearer understanding of this process, consider my most recent experience of the WWW. Starting from the *Poptart Homepage*,[17] I chose to proceed to the *Girls Can Do Anything* webzine.[18] I could have, however, proceeded to twenty other pages; my interest in zines governed this decision. From the *Girls Can Do Anything* selection page, I chose issue two (having already read issue one) which contains the following choices: *Special Report*, *Sailor Moon*, or *Women in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame*. I selected the *Special Report* but after reading about half of it I scanned ahead to see what my next choices would be. I could choose from *Laurel Gilbert* (I didn't know what that was) or *critique of the conference and suggestions*.[19] Because I thought I knew what critique was, I

chose *Laurel Gilbert*. Gilbert edits *The Novice Pages*[20] which include links to material concerning hardcore feminism; I chose to follow the link to *Geek Girl*[21], another webzine which eventually led me to a series of documents called *Virtual Sisterhood*[22] -- later I returned to read *critique of the conference and suggestions*. I made my choices based on my personal interests, but clearly I could have made other choices. Even within the bounds of my personal interests, I made choices based on varying criteria. Did I think I knew what it might be? If so, this knowledge might lead me to test my guess, or to choose something more mysterious. Either way, my textual experience placed me in the role of active decision maker.

While the machinations of publishing printed material (including plagiarism law) work to enforce the power differential between Professional and Amateur and to hold their texts apart (as if amateur writing might contaminate professional writing), on the internet the reader/writer can easily link his or her own documents to the work of other readers/writers. Herein, the dichotomy Amateur/Professional breaks down. In her essay "Reading and Writing in Hypertext: Vertigo and Euphoria," Johndan Johnson-Eilola

writes: "The move from writer or reader to the writer-reader of hypertext is a negotiation, a redistribution of traditional, hierarchical power arrangements. With the loss of the authoritative, untouchable author's identity, comes a new sense of identity as a communicator."[23] Hypertext also threatens the privileged status of canonized works by unfixing them from their physical, unalterable status and placing them in the fluid medium of computer-based text. In cyberspace, canonized texts are not held in awe and viewed at a distance; they are endlessly manipulable, always revisable, relinkable. No longer holy, all texts can be seen as material for future texts.

Teaching and learning literacy are reconfigured in similar ways. For instance, Landow suggests that the new information technologies of electronic school possess a democratizing potential which promises to redefine the roles of teacher and student. Electronic literacy shifts the dynamics of education from teacher control to learner control. In fact, networked writing environments support exploration and discovery; they are learning systems rather than teaching systems. On the net, students gain access to materials that, although available, are simply not accessible to

students of print literacy. The distance that lies between various materials in print culture and the time needed to access them, not to mention the restrictions imposed by unwieldy organization systems, foreclose the possibility that many students will ever avail themselves of such materials. In electronic school, the shift from deliberate explicit learning to implicit incidental learning reconfigures the teacher/student power dynamic.

By virtue of the new choices the reader/writer faces on the net, electronic school challenges some of the very basic assumptions we, as a culture, hold about teachers, learners, and the institutions they inhabit. Electronic school stimulates processes of integration and contextualization in a way not possible with linear presentation techniques. In electronic school there is no primary axis of organization; the learner chooses his/her own center of investigation and experience. These choices shift the focus or organizing principle of reading and research away from assimilation and towards invention. In light of these differences, our educational goals and methods of evaluation must also be reconfigured. As teachers, we must focus on how students connect things, not solely on what they connect. That is, we must overturn the old model

which sets the 'how' of connecting in stone (such as the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*) and turn our concentration to the processes of connecting. Academic writing must make room for pedagogies like zin/ography that use alternative logics, such as tangential and associational thinking, to perform their links.

To better understand what I mean by tangential and associational thinking and linking, consider the history of the life of MIT's e-mail list-serve which takes as its focus problems/questions of Censorship and Control in K-12 networked computer labs.[24] A list-serve is a special kind of e-mail system that distributes messages to all users who subscribe; if you post to the list, your post is "delivered" to all subscribers' electronic mail boxes. At one time, the list participants numbered 300+ and stretched across the globe, from South Africa to Canada. The first few days after I subscribed to the list, the discussion shifted between people who suggested, investigated, and shared information concerning technological solutions and those who suggested, investigated, and shared information concerning social solutions. After two or three days, however, the discussion shifted towards debating first amendment rights and how they might be applied to virtual

communities. (This thread clearly illustrates the dominance of a US presence on this list.) While discussing the second thread (first amendment rights), the first thread continued to receive air time, often with one respondent weaving both threads into one posting. A third thread arose which involved discussion of internet pornography; via association, it evolved to include not only porn, but also obnoxious user behavior and internet stalkers (particularly people who target children). Because people were trying to juggle so many "topics" in a day's discussion, the list volume spun out of control. The list was easily generating close to 100 posts daily; people began to unsubscribe. In an attempt to make the list more manageable, Amy Bruckman (list-host) suggested that each respondent try to post not more than five times daily. (We had seen that three people were generating close to 20 mini-posts each day.) Bruckman's suggestion, which has since made list volume more manageable, produced many longer multi-threaded posts -- many more than the list had previously seen. At this point, the discussion of technological solutions resurfaced as the dominant thread for a day or two before being deflected into a discussion of the trustworthiness of anonymous postings.

By this point, I had posted twice to the list. My posts were, I thought, well thought out attempts to shift the list's various threads into alternative frames of reference. The first post concerned reversing our focus from how to control obnoxious behavior (whether it be accessing porn or harassing other users -- the stalker issue had not yet surfaced, so I was directing my comments towards student-users) to the question of Desire -- why do kids want to access porn or behave obnoxiously? Is there a way to deflect this desire into a creative and instructive project in which the kids might participate? Could these students learn to make something with/about their desire? The list served one direct response to my post which involved an introductory phrase I'd used to lead up to what I considered to be the important issues of my post and about 20 responses to that "clearly off-topic" (in a print literacy sort of way) response. Later, I posted concerning conceptualizing the internet as a large performance art project -- a rather long post which I felt might provoke some interesting discussion. The list once again served one direct response which offered the comparison that although film was unreal, the virtual was real like the real world in that people could get hurt. At first I

was frustrated by the tangential responses to my posts (which I was obviously highly invested in) and during this time, a new list thread arose concerning off-topic posts (both of mine were considered clearly off-topic). This call to center, illuminated for me that the source of my frustration lay in my print literacy expectations. After posting, I awaited focused and centered responses and instead was met with wild shifts and slides that used peripheral fragments of my post as spring boards. Having realized the role my expectations were playing in my ability to enjoy the list and having realized that I needed to expect electronic rather than print logic from this list, I was free (I freed myself) to enjoy its twists and turns -- to see it as a useful example of tangential and associational logic.

Electronic school differs from print-based school in the way it *values* writing. Because electronic publishing blurs the institutional boundaries between literature, scholarship, and popular writing, electronic school also reconfigures both the literary canon and curriculum. This reconfiguration forces readers and writers to question the categories of value we are and have been using; it clearly calls the legitimacy of the canon into question. The

multiple reading paths that are characteristic of electronic literacy and that shift the balance between reader and writer create texts that are clearly situated in the world rather than separated off into elitist untouchable categories. This situating both reduces the hierarchy between main text and annotation and blurs the boundaries between individual texts and genres. Because electronic texts are networked, they foreground their linked status. Whereas print literacy relies on practices which help it to masquerade as independent thought, the foregrounding of links in electronic literacy encourages students not only to think in a non-linear fashion, but also to include their own thought processes in the reading/writing experience. Electronic literacy, however, is not a wholesale negation of the practices of print literacy; it is an hybridization of oral, visual, and print based practices often referred to as secondary orality. "The conventions of printed matter--indentations, margins, titles, page numbers, and the like--" notes William Costanzo, "are augmented or replaced by new conventions."[25] Contrary to popular myth, textual anarchy is not the only alternative to traditional academic writing; it is possible to invent other rhetorics. "In hypermedia," explains Ulmer,

the scholar does not provide a specific line of argument, an enunciation, but constructs a whole paradigm of possibilities, a set of statements, leaving the act of utterance to the reader/user. Or rather, the scholar's 'argument' exists at the level of the ideology/theory directing the system of the paradigm, determining the boundaries of inclusion/exclusion.[26]

Alphabetic and numeric indexing are our present means of managing information and with it Gutenberg's invention produced what we today understand as scholarship and criticism in the humanities, from the form such writing takes (such as the essay or treatise) to the means of storing and disseminating that information. Since the invention of writing and printing, information technology has concentrated on the problem of creating and disseminating static, unchanging records of language which conquer time and space. This technology has created a dilemma: preserving information in a static format makes retrieval difficult. Although linearity and hierarchy provide order, this order does not always match a user's needs. Because electronic school emphasizes intertextuality, multivocality and de-centering, electronic literacy blurs the boundary between readers and writers. Electronic school differs from book school in its use of associative indexing, a kind of indexing that research in artificial intelligence shows us simulates

the indexing of the human mind and thus promises to transform humanities' scholarship and criticism. The implications of the changes introduced by electronic school are broad. For instance, the meaning of publication changes. In electronic school, publication becomes a matter of gaining access to electronic networks rather than convincing a group of people that they should do the work of replication and dissemination for you. This shift reconfigures our experiences of authors and authorial property and thus reconfigures our conceptions of both the authors (and authority) of the texts we study and write. Because electronic school eases access to research materials, it facilitates the work of humanities research and criticism. Similarly, the connectivity, preservation, and accessibility of the net encourages interdisciplinary teaching and research in a manner that print culture simply cannot support. This foregrounding of connectivity effects students in electronic schools as well. Because it relies on making connections, electronic school fosters critical thinking. In so doing, it permits novices to experience the reading and thinking patterns of discipline experts. As an enabling technology, not a directive one, electronic school

changes the kinds of contributions student learners can make on a daily basis.

When we think of hypertext, we need to keep in mind that there are two 'kinds'; there are exploratory hypertext and constructive hypertext. While exploratory hypertext is read only, constructive hypertext is modifiable. Recall the description of my recent hypertextual experience with webzines. Although my initial discussion only describes my reading experiences, I might have linked my web pages to the *Geek Girl* zine (or any other document) if I had so chosen. For the purposes of this project, I am interested in the possibilities afforded by constructive hypertext. Also, taking my cue from Landow, I include the possibilities of hypermedia (sound, still and moving images, graphics, etc.) in my understanding of hypertext. In this study, I often use the abbreviated terms *hypertext* and *hypermedia* to refer to constructive hypermedia.

Where today's practice of electronic literacy is concerned, hypertext may represent some of the most revolutionary changes because it so spectacularly highlights the question of how we organize writing. Hypertext, writes Johnson-Eilola,

depends on a computer-based organizational scheme that allows [readers/writers] to move from one section of text (termed a node, often the size of a paragraph) to related sections of text quickly and easily. Such a text consists of a network, or levels, of multiply connected text segments. Hypertext writers set up multiple connections between nodes of a text, and readers choose which links to follow, which nodes to read, and which nodes to skip.[27]

Hypertext is hypertextual not because of a particular software, but because it follows a general theory of textual structure; hypertext readers do not read top to bottom across a page and front to back from page to page, but according to a path they navigate through a network of textual nodes. Where literacy is concerned, hypertext introduces a number of changes: the roles of reader and writer shift and fuse, the subject of discourse decenters, those previously silenced by the centered subject of discourse are given voice, and communities construct knowledge and text. The fundamental alterations to the roles of writer, reader and text call us to redefine those of teacher, teaching and learning literacy. Pedagogically, hypertext inspires a reconceptualization of the terms *literature* and *text*. In her article "The Rhetoric of Empowerment in Writing Programs," Harriet Malinowitz notes that "writing should be seen as part of a larger process, a process of engagement in a

dialectic with others." She explains that the "reorganizing of authority in the classroom must consist of more than just the encouragement of students to write, that it must represent a total rendering of the classroom to incorporate collaboration and liberate education."[28]

Of interest to zin/ography are the possibilities hypertext presents for exploring writing with identification. Johnson-Eilola remarks that, "It is these constructive-personal knowledge hypertexts that most seriously challenge assumptions about the respective positions and functions of student writing and literature in the classroom."[29] The decentering effects of hypertextual production allow writers to see something from somewhere else; hypertextual decentering affords the writer to be detached without having to be distant. The combination of the WWW (as a hypermedia space) with MOOville (the University of Florida's MOO)[30] promises an exciting interface for writing with identification in a learned way.

MOO space interests me in the context of this project because it evolved from MUDs, a type of *game*. In these non-adventure style

MUDs a player earns status by building rather than successfully completing adventures (which usually amounts to killing monsters and unraveling mysteries). A MOO participant's prowess is determined by his/her ingenuity in writing an environment -- to write interesting spaces is to succeed at the "game" of MOOing. The criteria of what constitutes an interesting space is determined by the character of each particular MOO. For instance, some MOOs are themed; not unlike the many fanzines, there is a "place" called TrekMUSE[31], a fanMOO. In these MOOs, it is important not only to write ingenious environments, but also to play your role well -- both acts of writing determine your social status. In her paper "Identity Workshop: Emergent Social and Psychological Phenomena in Text-Based Virtual Reality," Amy Bruckman offers this description:

> Activity on themed MUDs includes role playing as well as the usual building and casual socializing. The theme shapes the design of the game and provides a shared body of knowledge and interests for participants.
>
> I chose to become a part of the community of a themed MUD: TrekMUSE. . . . TrekMUSE is based on themes taken from the television show *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. On TrekMUSE, my character's name is 'Mara'. I am an Ensign in Starfleet. I interviewed with commanders on multiple ships before I was offered a commission aboard the USS Yorktown. ...I was Ensign Mara of the USS Yorktown, the acting flagship of the

Federation. . . .

My character is a member of the B'joran race, an
oppressed people modeled after the Kurds or Palestinians.
In the television series *Star Trek: The Next Generation*,
B'joran characters are presented as rebellious and
disrespectful of authority. It is therefore part of my job
as a good role player to talk-back to authority and
occasionally disobey orders[32]

MOOs are of interest to this project in terms of the identity
experiments they often host. MOOs help people to understand the
concept of identity and the ways in which we construct ourselves.
In this context, MOOs also allow players to experiment with the
contours of community and the stereotypes of specific communities.
MOOs, and the internet in general, are well known spaces for gender
switching. To masquerade as another gender in a MOO is to pose the
stereotypes of that social construction for oneself. In her paper,
Bruckman writes that MOOs "are a workshop for the concept of
identity. Many players notice that they are somehow different on
the net than off, and this leads them to reflect on who they are in
real life."[33] Because zin/ography aims to allow writers to work
with or stage their identifications in a learned way, MOOs suggest

an interesting field for experimenting with this genre of electronic literacy.

Not only are the role-playing, and therefore identity-staging, possibilities of MOOs of interest to zin/ographic writing, but their penchant for language play also strikes me. MOO chat encourages associational thinking because it rewards language play. Consider the following log of a TrekMUSE exchange in which one conversational thread concerns staging the stereotypes of gender while the other concerns the possibilities of language play. (For presentation purposes the thread concerning language play is indented)

> Tao says "I have noticed that female char's have that prob ... a friend of mine is playing a female to see if it is true ... and he says it is"

>> Krag announces"@set me=Bored Don't tell me I'm gonna have to >work< ..."

Tao says "You can never be sure ... but I guarantee you I am male"

You say "it doesn't really matter to me"

Rev announces "Okay, I won't.:)"

Tao announces "Krag, we didn't set you Whine_ok"

You say "but it does make ya wonder"

Tao nods

Tao says "of course it does"

Mara laughs!

Agora announces "You're gonna have to >work<... >;)"

Cheech announces "Yeah, I'm bored but I sort of   promised not to make any more trouble for awhile..."

Krag announces "Hey now. I'm the self-proclaimed   Whine Steward. Back off.;)"

Tao chuckles

Fitch announces "are you related to Patrick Steward?   Oh, sorry."

Tao was slightly lagged

Public announcement from player #16216 'Edi:
@give   Krag=BOOT TO THE HEAD."

You say "so i guess folks do more hanging out than role playing"

Rev announces "That's Patrick Stewart."
Cheech announces "*sigh*"
Fitch announces "close enough :-)"

Tao says "depends ... at 3:30 am ... we talk and hang ... at 3:30 pm there tends to be a lot of role-playing"

Mara nods.

Tao says "sometimes late can be more fun ..."[34]

Of note in this excerpt is not only the language play, but the decentering of the exchange. Tao, for instance, easily participates in both the personal exchange with Mara and the public exchange with the other players -- *simultaneously*. To elucidate the play, Bruckman explains that announcements such as "@set me=Bored" play on programming language. This virtual world is constructed out of commands such as @ set me=visible which tell the computer to 'make you visible' (to tell the other players that you are visible). Thus, later in the exchange when Tao announces that "we didn't set you Whine_ok" he puns on the flag enter_ok used in programming language. To enter_ok something is to make that thing enterable. Tao announces that the players have not set Krag to whine.

Within the discourse domain that is *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, Fitch's response to Krag's announcement that he is "the self-proclaimed Whine Steward" (already punning on the food service position wine steward) puns on the name of one of the actors who stars in the television show. Through a deliberate misspelling,

Patrick Stewart is associatively linked to Whine Steward. When Rev breaks with the play by correcting Fitch's spelling (s/he obviously doesn't get the joke), Cheech emotes at him/her sarcastically: **sigh**. "The conversation," notes Bruckman "is multi-threaded and multi-layered."[35] Unlike traditional academic writing, this MOO writing is playful and fragmented.

Electronic School: A Social Machine

Electronic school calls the concept of literacy into question. In their article "Studying Literacy with Computers," Susan Hilligoss and Cynthia L. Selfe propose that most fundamentally, literacy consists of the actions and transactions of the writer writing and the reader reading.[36] These transactions, however, are not simply mechanistic; they have political, social, and economic characteristics which include the roles of authors and readers, the nature of interpretation and subjectivity, and the ways in which people construct meaning within the web of their personal and/or community experiences. Literacy never stands alone as a neutral set of skills; it is always literacy for something. For instance, there

are different models of literacy: functional, vocational, social, critical, cultural, etc. In this light, Paul J. LeBlanc argues that "shifts in the application of technology for literacy education require two things: a clear understanding of the model of literacy one is working toward and a critical perspective of technology and its implications for classroom use."[37] In general terms, zin/ography is a pedagogy designed to promote critical literacy; zin/ography, however, approaches this task by crossing literacies, by instructing writers in the inventing of hybrid literacies -- all within the logic of the electronic. In "Literacy and the Politics of Education," C.H. Knoblauch defines critical literacy:

> Its agenda is to identify reading and writing abilities with a critical consciousness of the social conditions in which people find themselves, recognizing the extent to which language practices objectify and rationalize these conditions and the extent to which people with authority to name the world dominate others.[38]

Zin/ography invokes the writer to critically explore the relationship between his/her identifications, his/her use of language, and how s/he is caught in the cultural net. "Literacy," notes Knoblauch "is the only means that enables entrance to the arena in which power [in such relationships] is contested."[39] Critical literacy affects not

only the student writer's relationship to school, but also his/her relationship to work, family, and community life. Because of its interactivity, the networked writing environment proves to be a compatible host for such social exploration.

Unlike print literacy, networked writing environments enable people to collaborate and create knowledge through discussion. Bakhtin's theory of dialogue, as it informs social interaction and social construction and ultimately the creation of literacy, best explains this phenomenon. For Bakhtin, communication is an active deliberate process where listeners and readers are as fully engaged in meaning making as are speakers and writers and where dialogue shapes and reshapes the larger social context. To be socially literate is to be able to interact and communicate with other members of a discourse community; the socially literate person understands social contexts and is privy to shared beliefs and unstated meanings. The illiterate cannot decode these contexts. For instance, some readers/writers, because of their race, class, or gender, are socially illiterate in certain situations. Whereas one person might be literate in the workplace or the family, they might not be in an academic environment. The social/textual interaction

afforded by the net crosses domains of social literacy. For instance, the literacy of the family often intersects with that of entertainment, or, more pertinent to this project, the literacy of entertainment often crosses that of the academy. To participate in the discourse of a community, a reader/writer must be literate about its social aspects; as the discourses of different communities intersect on the net, hybrid literacies develop.

Electronic literacy represents a revision, not a replacement, of print literacy; it's important to keep this distinction in mind. "Hypertext," Johnson-Eilola reminds us "is neither a simple continuation nor a wholesale replacement of normal reading and writing theories and activities but a positive disruption."[40] To embrace this disruption, however, is to accept a pedagogic responsibility -- for the technology alone is not enough to ensure that the disruption is productive. As Sue Jansen points out, "technological designs are also social designs;"[41] cultural values, economic interests, and political decisions are as integral to a computer's composition as mathematical calculation, motors, and circuit boards. Unless we apply pedagogically inventive thinking to the networked writing environment, we will be limited to 'skill and

drill' type applications wherein computers provide "students with basic keyboard and hardware familiarity; it [skill and drill software] serves a product instead of process model of writing and encourages a pedagogy based on test scores. Knowledge becomes a set of facts and literacy a series of mechanical and rule-bound acts."[42]

Networked writing environments can be made to service a verification model of education, but to use it so is not only to deny ourselves the inventive potential of the technology, but also to ignore the nontechnological components of the apparatus of literacy. Cooperative learning is not automatic, it depends on careful thinking. Betsey A. Bowen warns that "in the relatively short history of educational computing, we have repeatedly seen computers themselves become the focus of instruction, rather than the intellectual development that computers can enhance."[43] In the chapters that follow, zin/ography reroutes our thinking about the possibilities for electronic literacy by demonstrating an inventive use of the internet as writing lab.

With so many variable interfaces, the internet suggests many possibilities as a new writing technology. *Inventing Zin/ography* imagines a pedagogy based on some of these possibilities. With

zin/ography, I propose to augment, rather than replace, academic writing. Taking my cue from Swearingen, who argues that "the claims of personal experience and authority that are foregrounded by women and minorities as they build new intellectual cultures, literatures, and voices need not entail a wholesale rejection of the notions of rationality and objectivity,"[44] I recognize her concern that we not set ourselves up to 'reinvent the wheel'. Zin/ography introduces academic writing to the characteristics of electronic literacy in order to invent new practices of academic writing which combine critique and hermeneutics with practices that exploit the educational potential of networked writing environments. Zin/ography teaches writers how to use internet webzines as an inventive model for staging personal identifications in a critical yet aesthetic way; it promises to *enhance* today's practices of academic writing by allowing amateur writers to access the personal in a provocative way.

<u>Notes</u>

1. Robert C. Allen, ed., *Channels of Discourse* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1987).

2 The apparatus is used in cinema studies to critique cinema as an institution or social machine. The concept foregrounds the notion that cinema (or, for this project, computing) is as much ideological as it is technological; it indicates that ideology is necessarily a part of any "machine."

2. Gregory Ulmer, *Teletheory: Grammatology in the Age of Video* (New York: Routledge, 1989) 4.

3. Joseph Gibaldi and Walter S. Achtert, ed, "Preface for the Student," *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* 3rd ed. (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1988).

4. George P. Landow, *Hypertext: The Convergence of Contemporary Critical Theory and Technology* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992).

5. C. Jan Swearingen, *Rhetoric and Irony: Western Literacy and Western Lies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991) 9.

6. Eugene R. Hammond, *Teaching Writing* (New York: McGraw- Hill Book Company,1983).

7. Robert Hodge and Gunter Kress, *Social Semiotics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988) 257.

8. Swearingen, 9.

9. Lisa Ede and Andrea Lunsford, *Singular Texts/Plural Authors: Perspectives on Collaborative Writing* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1990).

10. Hodge and Kress, 259.

11. Ann Hill Duin and Craig Hansen, "Reading and Writing on Computer Networks as Social Construction and Social Interaction," *Literacy and Computers: The Complications of Teaching and Learning with*

Technology, eds. Cynthia L. Selfe & Susan Hilligoss (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1994) 112.

12. I use the third edition of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* because the recently released fourth edition fails to address the topic of electronic school at all, suggesting even further that the MLA is at a loss when it comes to thinking about electronic school.

13. Gail E. Hawisher, "Blinding Insights: Classification Schemes and Software for Literacy Instruction," *Literacy and Computers: The Complications of Teaching and Learning with Technology*, eds. Cynthia L. Selfe & Susan Hilligoss (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1994) 47.

14. In film studies, *suture* is used to describe the effects of continuity editing: realism. The term refers to both the actual edit and the viewer's identification of/with the diegetic world of the film as real (the viewer is said to be sutured into the diegetic world). Similarly, the essay works according to its own rules of continuity (inductive and deductive reasoning, for example) which have become naturalized as *logic*. One of the questions at hand, then, for hypertext is the nature of the suture . What will be its naturalized form? Will it have one? What are the ramifications of such developments?

15. Hawisher, 89.

16. Jay David Bolter, *Writing Space: The Computer, Hypertext, and the History of Writing*, (Hillsdale: L. Erlbaum Associates, 1991) 205.

17. *Poptart Homepage*, http://www.bgsu.edu/~ckile/ptorigin.html

18. *Girls Can Do Anything*, http://www.bgsu.edu/~ckile/GCDATWO.html

19. *Novice Pages*, http://www.bgsu.edu/~lgilber/lgilber.html

20. *critique of the conference and suggestions,*
http://www.bgsu.edu/~ckile/critique.html

21. *geek girl,* http://www.next.com.au/spyfood/geekgirl/index.html

22. *virtual sisterhood,*
http://www.next.com.au/spyfood/geekgirl/002manga/usis.html

23. Johndan Johnson-Eilola, "Reading and Writing in Hypertext: Vertigo and Euphoria," *Literacy and Computers: The Complications of Teaching and Learning with Technology,* eds. Cynthia L. Selfe & Susan Hilligoss (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1994) 213.

24. caci@mit.media.edu

25. William Constanzo, "Reading, Writing, and Thinking in an Age of Electronic Literacy" *Literacy and Computers: The Complications of Teaching and Learning with Technology,* eds. Cynthia L. Selfe & Susan Hilligoss (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1994) 13.

26. Gregory Ulmer, "Grammatology (in the Stacks) of Hypermedia: A Simulation," *Literacy Online: The Promise (and peril) of Reading and Writing with Computers,* ed. Myron C. Tuman (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1992) 142.

27. Johnson-Eilola, 197.

28. Harriet Malinowitz, "The Rhetoric of Empowerment in Writing Programs," *Literacy and Computers: The Complications of Teaching and Learning with Technology,* ed. Cynthia L. Selfe & Susan Hilligoss (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1994) 112.

29. Johnson-Eilola, 207.

30. moo.ucet.ufl.edu 7777

31. trek.cndir.org 1701

32. Amy Bruckman, "Identity Workshop: Emergent Social and Psychological Phenomena in Text-Based Virtual Reality," (MIT Media Laboratory, 1992) 10-11.

33. Bruckman, 22.

34. Bruckman, 1-2.

35. Bruckman, 3.

36. Susan Hilligoss and Cynthia L. Selfe, "Studying Literacy with Computers," *Literacy and Computers: The Complications of Teaching and Learning with Technology,* ed. Cynthia L. Selfe & Susan Hilligoss (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1994) 336-340.

37. Paul J. Leblanc, "The Politics of Literacy and Technology in Secondary School Classrooms," *Literacy and Computers: The Complications of Teaching and Learning with Technology,* eds. Cynthia L. Selfe & Susan Hilligoss (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1994) 32.

38. C.H. Knoblauch, "Literacy and the Politics of Education," *The Right to Literacy,* eds. Lunsford, Moglen, and Slevin, (New York: The Modern Language Association, 1990) 46.

39. Knoblauch, 129.

40. Johnson-Eilola, 203.

41. Sue Curry Jansen, "Gender and the Information Society: A Socially Structured Silence," *Journal of Communications,* (39.3, 1989) 127.

42. LeBlanc, 31.

43. Betsy A. Bowen, "Telecommunications Networks: Expanding the Contexts for Literacy," *Literacy and Computers: The Complications of Teaching and Learning with Technology*, eds. Cynthia L. Selfe & Susan Hilligoss (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1994) 114.

44. Swearingen, 235.

CHAPTER 4

SHE TALKS IN STEREO

[snap] A woman strains as she looks out into the glare of the midday sun. She squints behind the tinted lenses of insufficient sunglasses while dangling a glass from three fingers. Is someone hailing her? Her disheveled appearance (she's in a state of *dishabille*) contextualized by the glare of the sun and the seahorses affixed to the sliding glass door suggest a clandestine motel rendez-vous.

[snap] A little girl twists in her seat, constrained by her tiny desk. Smiling she cranes her neck towards her neighbor, finger pressed to her lips: shhhhhhh.

[snap] Hurrying down the street she pulls her collar tighter to her neck as if it were a shield of some sort. The dark wet street around her reflects and defracts the light of the overhead street lamps.

Glancing slightly to her left, the woman holds her mouth open ever so slightly as if she might need to scream.

[snap] The babydoll dress hangs at an awkward angle, too short to be worn comfortably. Courtney wriggles her ass, pulling down on the hem of her dress with both hands while adjusting the bust.

How might art fissure the very representation of meaning? An enormous question, no doubt, and not one I would attempt to answer fully. In fact, in what follows I stubbornly shy away from answering with any confidence at all. Instead, in the stead of or in lieu of an answer, I would like to simply explore the question through a particular case--what I'll call a case study. Let's call it the case of Cindy Sherman. What is Cindy Sherman up to in her photography?

The case of Cindy Sherman: intriguing perhaps, but that doesn't really say much about my guiding question: what might I mean by "fissure the very representation of meaning"? When I pose this question I mean to ask after signification, or more precisely speaking, the duo signifier and signified. If this duo represents

meaning, fissuring this representation might entail fissuring this duo -- prizing the signifier from the signified. My concern then would be, is, with the means, methods, or techniques by which such prizing might be affected. How might I prize signifiers from signifieds? Re-enter the case of Cindy Sherman. Sherman is an important case because she explores the representation of meaning in at least two significant ways that I adapt to zin/ography. As the left channel of this chapter suggests, Sherman uses the stereotype to explore representation from within by staging her own representations on her body and in her image--a technique referred to as immanent critique. As the right channel proposes, Sherman, or rather her work, suggests or points to/out some means, methods, or techniques which fissure the representation of meaning.

In what follows I want to bring the techniques addressed in the left channel into a particular kind of focus by screening them through a certain Barthesian theory of representation. I am now thinking of Barthes' work in "The Third Meaning."[1] In this essay, Barthes makes some rather pointed remarks about free floating signifiers, ones that are detached from particular meanings. Borrowing Barthes' notion of the third meaning, I look to Sherman's

work as, among other things, an attempt to use the third meaning as a *strategy*.

Left Channel

Stereotypes

I begin my exploration of stereotypes with Robert B. Ray's chapter "Snapshots: The Beginnings of Photography"[2] because here he discusses stereotypes in the context of photography. Ray notes that stereotypes function as a category of knowledge by making chaos legible. He articulates this point by telling a story of the beginnings of modern urban life. Modern urban life came of age between 1839 and 1842 bringing with it (among other things) the anonymity of crowded city life. No longer was a person recognizable to everyone s/he encountered in his/her daily life. Instead, s/he moved as a stranger among throngs of strangers. Coincidentally, perhaps, perhaps not, this scene witnessed the rise of photography, *physiologies*, and detective stories. Photography promised to police the chaos of this life by exacting visual replicas of people and scenes for comparison and study. The *physiologies*, some of the

best-selling popular books of the period, were descriptive collections of 'character-types' such as bankers, blacksmiths, or dandies which provided readers with written (alphabetic) "images" for matching strangers with cultural stereotypes. Detectives in detective stories often relied on such cultural knowledge to unravel mysteries (think of Holmes' deductions). The intersection of these phenomena points to the rise of stereotypes as categories of knowledge.

Ray elucidates his understanding of the stereotype as such using Barthes' work in *S/Z*. In this study, Barthes argues that cultural or reference codes originate not in reality itself but in representations of it. Cultures then gather these representations into imaginary collections (which Barthes provocatively calls a "school manual") of common sense, received ideas, and cultural stereotypes on which the reference code relies for meaning. The *physiologies* provide an example of just such a manual. These manuals provided citizens with "snapshots" of various social types: "the drinker," "the salesgirl," or "the Englishman in Paris." By delineating these various types, the *physiologies* provided their readers with "a legible system of difference"[3] which worked to

establish rather than reference representational reality.
Stereotypes, thus, prove useful as tools for ordering what would
otherwise be chaotic perceptions. Rather than being a formation we
can simply do away with, stereotypes are inherent to knowledge.
For instance, the detective story relied on these reference codes to
make the world legible. "Thus, for Sherlock Holmes," notes Ray
"physical evidence is always unproblematically indexical: 'the
writer' will inevitably display a shiny cuff and a worn elbow patch,
'the laborer' a muscular hand, 'the visitor to China' a particular
Oriental tatoo."[4] Stereotypes allow us to extrapolate from the little
that we do know to a greater knowledge. With stereotypical
thinking, what a person learns (or comes to know) greatly exceeds
what s/he initially knows (his/her evidence). Holmes reasons with
stereotypes: a man's use of a particular phrase signals a trace of
dialect thus allowing Holmes to construct a history for him.

Cindy Sherman's *Untitled Film Stills* demonstrate one
particular use of the stereotype as a category of knowledge. In this
series of photographs, Sherman poses or stages nameable
stereotypes. These stereotypes sometimes correspond to a general
cultural image ("the career girl" or "the house wife"); at other times

they correspond to a specific filmic stereotype ("film noir" or "Hitchcockian"). Whatever the particular cultural reference, these stereotypes order and direct our readings of these photographs.

Sherman stages these stereotypes by paying close attention to detail. Consider for a moment *Untitled Film Still #21*: the career girl.

I can read this image using Barthes' theory of the "first meaning"; that is, Sherman's references to certain stereotypes allow me to read it at an informational level. The costuming and make-up of the woman in this image signal a style of the past. The young woman's close-cropped hair, smart suit and perky hat evoke the stereotype of the 1950s career girl. Not content to stay at home baking chocolate chip cookies (recall the "June Cleaver" stereotype of the 1950s housewife), this snappy woman competently navigates the big city. The image is dated by the width and flare of the blouse collar, the texture of the suit material, and the close-fitting hat which perches on the woman's head. This hat is remarkably undramatic. Her 1950s conservatism is marked by the light lipstick, unadorned ears, and rounded--rather than arched--eyebrows.

Clearly, though, this image communicates more than the simple "message" of "the career girl." I can also read a "second meaning" in this image. What might it mean at the symbolic level? First and foremost (at least critically) this image *means* postmodernism because, as the collected authors of *Art After Modernism* suggest, the postmodern aesthetic is marked by several key practices: a removation of styles of the past, a transgression

of classification systems, and the appropriation of other texts. We might say that these are three stereotypical practices of postmodern art in that they continuously call the viewer/reader's attention to art's place in the web of culture. Furthermore, this image symbolically represents the "Hitchcockian" heroine as the woman (somewhat dwarfed by the looming buildings in the background) furtively glances over her shoulder and out of the frame, indicating some as-of-yet unseen danger.

Sherman is not, notes critic Peter Bunell, an interesting photographer; she is, however, an interesting artist. Bunell argues that Sherman is not an interesting photographer because she is not concerned with the history and tradition of photography as a medium (that is she is not concerned with Art Photography); her medium, rather, is predicated on the uses and functions of photography in mass media. By staging mass media as art, Sherman, like Warhol, critically analyzes *Untitled Film Still #21*. Masquerading as a 1950s film still, this image transgresses the divide between low and high art. Film, one of the entertainment or popular arts, has historically been separated from the high or fine arts. By mimicking the appropriation of a film still for use in "high" art, Sherman

comments on the ideological nature of the high/low art divide by suggesting that her art is composed of a "stolen" image.

In this "still," Sherman treats mimesis not simply as an aesthetic activity, but as a function of subjectivity. The photograph is a self-portrait in which Sherman is masked; she stages the stereotype of the career girl not only on her body, but on her image. The still effect prevents us from mistaking Sherman's woman for a particular human subject caught up in a narrative of romance or intrigue. While it is possible to read this image at Barthes' first level of meaning, it impossible to stop there. This still compels a typological reading: not a woman, but the image of woman. The still reveals the stereotype projected by the media for imitation and identification: woman as specular model of femininity; she is a trope or figure.

Sherman's still *implies* a narrative, however. The furtive glance and the spatial dislocation of the close-up face against the distant buildings suggest cinematic techniques: the eyeline match and rear-screen projection. The costume-like clothing and make-up signal disguise. Douglas Crimp notes that "like ordinary snapshots, they [Sherman's stills] appear to be fragments; unlike those

snapshots, their fragmentation is not that of the natural continuum, but of a syntagmatic sequence, that is, of a continual, segmented temporality."[6] And yet, the image is not part of a sequence or narrative. Its position as a "still" calls into question the naturalness of these assumptions. The uncanny precision with which Sherman represents her tropes accomplishes the work of deconstructing the supposed innocence of the images of women projected by the media. Sherman accomplishes this feat by reconstructing the images so painstakingly and identifying herself with them so thoroughly that artist and role appear to merge into a seamless whole. Our attention is drawn to distinguishing these two positions. Sherman critically analyzes such media images by showing or making a work, rather than telling; she unveils the ideological positioning of such images through a reveiling. "For Sherman's images, disguise functions as parody; it works to expose the identification of the self with an image as its dispossession . . . ."[7] By implicating the mass media as the false mirror which promotes such alienating identifications, Sherman registers this "truth" as both ethical and political. Identifying "her" stereotypes (those that call to her for imitation), Sherman does not leave her

stereotypes in her body, but simulates them with a machine: photography. She augments her stereotypes with a prosthesis.

Appropriating Postmodern Art

For zin/ography, I would like to adopt two of the practices noted by the collected authors of *Art After Modernism*: the appropriation of other texts and the transgression of classification systems. Sherman's use of these practices indicates directions for such appropriation. Where the appropriation of other texts is concerned, I am most interested in the possibility of using popular texts as guides to and through personal identifications (stereotypes). Such use of popular texts in an academic setting in turn entails the transgression of the traditional classification systems of higher learning (for instance, the canon).

When I "speak of" using popular texts as guides to and through identifications, I mean to invoke immanent critique. Immanent critique refers to a method of learning from within -- rather than from a critical distance. In "Change the Object Itself," Barthes articulates a challenge: Critique itself has become doxa. How do we proceed once this is the case? Sherman backgrounds Critique as a

method by *changing the object itself*. That is, Sherman's art does not Critique; it does not simply stand outside as a metalanguage with which we might demystify the web of culture, but rather it speaks (about) itself with an interior language. Sherman comments on the "career girl" stereotype by staging that stereotype on her body and in her image. She performs the work of critical analysis by making her critique *immanent*. By foregrounding the referential status of itself as cultural product and practice, postmodern art problematizes the activity of referencing. The art of stealing indicts that which it steals (and by association, that which it is) as mythological, but does not propose that it escapes or demystifies that mythology. Sherman's *Untitled Film Still #21* does not undo the stereotype of the "career girl." Instead, it proposes a new relationship to mythology suggesting that the object, here the relationship of critique to demystification, must be changed.

Zin/ography adopts this practice of commentary from within--not in the interest of abandoning Critique, but rather in the interest of foregrounding its ideological positioning. Critique, as a pedagogical method, shies away from stereotypes; adopting the Enlightenment's strategy, Critique relies on the absolute separation

of episteme and doxa thereby bifurcating the humanities into two camps: specialized commentary (knowledge) and practice (opinion). The practice of art is held apart from knowledge of art. For Holmes, such a situation would be dangerously limiting; he would be unable to discover. Similarly, humanities students who are forced to conceive of knowledge devoid of opinion are unable to invent, to discover; they are trapped by the illusion of objectivity, of science. As a grammatological project, zin/ography provides an alternative approach to the operation of stereotypes in knowledge because it is not *absolutely* committed to the apparatus of the book (the ideology of the humanist subject, academic writing and print technology). Zin/ography demonstrates that we may accept some of the values of Critique without reifying one particular model of critical thinking; we may reintroduce the practice of art to the knowledge of art. Thus the zin/ographic text operates both knowledge and opinion, commentary and practice, by staging immanent critiques of the zin/ographer's identifications.

In *Laying My Cards on the Table*, I stage four of my identifications with Courtney Love. Rather than comment on these stereotypes as they are manifest in/by Courtney Love, I perform an

immanent critique of them by writing with them and with their manifestations in my own life. Like Sherman who stages her stereotypes on her body and in her photographic images, I stage my stereotypes in my writing and on my "self" (as constituted by and through my writing). My goal is not to undo my stereotypes but rather to learn how to make or do something with them; my goal is to know them in a new way.

As we shall see in chapter four, Barthes constructs *A Lover's Discourse* using immanent critique. The point, Ulmer suggests in *Heuretics*, is to write judgement rather than only think or feel it; Sherman writes hers with a camera and Barthes his with paper. Barthes explains: "The writer's only control over stereotypic vertigo . . . is to participate in it without quotation marks, producing a text . . ."[8] Zin/ography teaches writers to control their stereotypic vertigo through simulation. By appropriating the techniques of fan writing, the zin/ographer produces a text which writes his/her judgements. Recall the MOO log in chapter two; one thread of the discussion involves the experiences of gender switching in cyberspace. Tao's friend, who stages a female character (when he is in fact male in "real life"), must parade the stereotypes of

femininity to pass as female. That is, he must be able to simulate the stereotypes textually to be real, much in the same way that the participants in the Harlem Ball culture (documented by Jennie Livingston in her film *Paris Is Burning*) must perform those stereotypes if they are to survive on the streets of New York. In staging their stereotypes (and we all participate in the stereotyping of gender) both the Ball walkers and the MOOers learn about the representation of gender from within. Similarly, Bruckman, as the B'joran Mara, learns about the American stereotypes of Kurds and Palestinians as she must perform them in order to sustain a popular character (that is, a character to whom others want to talk) in TrekMUSE. As a hypermedia experiment, zin/ography contextualizes similar performances and adapts such simulations to the project of writing.

Adopting, rather than jettisoning, identification to the practice of writing in an academic setting entails transgressing certain boundaries. Traditionally, academic writing has held itself specifically apart from popular forms of writing with identification. Unlike the technology of the typewriter and the printing press, hypermedia blurs the boundaries between popular and serious

writing allowing for playful movement between these two approaches. Zin/ography explores the mixing of these two approaches.

The postmodern condition, notes Foucault, illustrates that the problem at hand is no longer to liberate the individual from the state and institutions, but from the state and the type of individualization inscribed in its power structures. One form of such liberation comes from opening up the possibilities of student writing to alternatives to academic writing. Because a change in one aspect of the apparatus instigates changes in others, the shift from print to electronic technologies of writing initiates a shift from the subjectivity of humanism to something else. As noted in chapter one, this something else is the postmodern or socially constructed subject. Whereas print literacy asks writers to stage their individuality through original thought, postmodern writing asks writers to stage their place(s) in the web of culture. Rather than insist that student writing aspire to universal reason masquerading as Truth, students might be asked to exploit aesthetics as they stage their place(s) in the world. Recalling Trinh T. Minh-ha's critique of anthropologist's objectivity,

> At no time, while he sets out scientifically to interpret the natives as bearers of a stamp imprinted on them by the institutions in which they live, by the influence of tradition and folklore, by the very vehicle of thought, that is, by language, does he feel the scientific urge to specify where he himself stands as a stereotype of his community, in his interpretations.9

I note that the point is not to turn our backs on academic writing, but rather to introduce this practice to others which might highlight and contextualize the ideologic nature of academic writing. Zin/ography asks the writer to include or show forth his/her position(s) in the web of culture. In so doing, zin/ography liberates the amateur writer by disengaging curiosity from Truth.

Postmodern art practices shift aesthetic focus from the originality and singularity of the autonomous and self-contained art object to the always already connectedness of the art text. By appropriating filmic images (images that look as if they are indeed stills from some familiar film), Sherman comments on the conceptual divide between Art and Commerce calling particular attention to the status and role of commercial art in consumers' everyday lives. Sherman theorizes art as a cultural practice. Her recontextualization of one of America's most readily recognized kinds of images (out of the movie house and into the gallery)

functions as critical analysis--and the indictment cuts both ways. Commercial art masquerading as High Art not only calls the ideological construction of notions like High Art into question, it also interrogates the role of commercialism and consumerism in American society. By making art of a mass produced image, Sherman shifts aesthetic focus from originality to the myth of originality and to the pervasiveness of the web of culture. Film stills' familiarity to us as images comments on the elitist belief that art is something set apart while articulating art's connection with commercialism, industrialism, and the market.

The postmodern condition demonstrates that there is no place of transcendence because we are all in culture; there is no outside from which to view the inside. Because it is impossible to situate oneself outside mainstream values, Trinh suggests that we challenge mainstream values by constantly moving back and forth between the center and the margins. Rather than supposing we can escape our place in culture, zin/ography directs writers to narrate their contingency. *Laying My Cards on the Table* narrates my contingency or some of my places in the web of culture. Taking direction from Sherman, this experiment cites several forms of

popular writing. Fragments such as "Showing a Clean Pair of Heels," "Crocodile Tears" and "The Fair Sex" appropriate the aesthetic of the interview, the personal journal, and the video to academic writing. Using these forms I stage myself as I am often caught in the web of culture.

Composing

The logic which regulates the zin/ographic text is not comprehensive, but metonymic. It regulates the text according to associations, contiguities, and cross-references. This logic tunes to the "stereographic plurality"[9] of signifiers which is woven entirely with cultural languages: citations, references, and echoes. Metaphorically, the zin/ographic text is a network. The associative logic of electronic literacy is best explained by Freud's elaboration of the dream work as a kind of network. Freud noted that dreams were constructed via specific unconscious practices: displacement, condensation, dramatization, and secondary revision. That is, like collage, dreams are constructed by appropriation, citation, juxtaposition and fragmentation. Ulmer notes the political dimension that accrues to such a shift in logic: "to say that the logic

of electronics is the dream work is to propose that the unconscious is included explicitly and systematically in reasoning and writing."[10] This inclusion of the unconscious in the practice of writing signals the breakdown of the alphabetic and modernist inclination to keep categories neatly separated; we should be studying and teaching this electronic logic in *all* writing classes. Schooling should provide leadership in the design of electronic pedagogies. That is, we should not only study *about* this logic, but practice it by making electronic texts, for school is responsible for preparing people to live with these electronic machines. In order to productively meet this responsibility, school must realize that electronic machines include the invention of social and personal as well as technological practices.

In *Fragments of Rationality*, Lester Faigley notes that in aesthetic terms, composition studies maintains the modernist tension between form and chaos, coherence and fragmentation, determinacy and indeterminacy while consistently privileging the former terms (modernist aesthetic) over the latter. "Even though composition studies coincides with the era of postmodernism," notes Faigley "there is seemingly little in the short history of

composition studies that suggests a postmodern view of heterogeneity and difference as liberating forces, and there are very few calls to celebrate the fragmentary and chaotic currents of change.[11] Consider the varying characteristics Ihab Hassan offers in his article "The Culture of Postmodernism."[12]

modernism	postmodernism
romanticism	paraphysics
form (closed text)	antiform (open text)
purpose	play
design	chance
hierarchy	anarchy
mastery/logos	exhaustion/silence
art object/finished work	process/performance/happening

The characteristics Hassan lists as modernist echo the characteristics of academic writing articulated in chapter three of this project. Although composition studies has assimilated the postmodern ideas that knowledge is socially situated and that representation is implicated in social and political relations, it has done little to nothing with postmodern aesthetics or theory. Faigley

asserts "Even with the last opposition--art object/finished work' versus 'process/performance/happening'--composition studies tilts toward modernism because while composition studies has professed to value process, it is not process for its own sake but rather the process of teleological development toward a product."[13] Zin/ography changes all of this by introducing postmodern aesthetic practices to composition studies; zin/ography engages postmodernism as a way of composing.

Faigley tells a similar story where postmodern theory is concerned. "Since the beginning of composition teaching in the late nineteenth century, college writing teachers have been heavily invested in the stability of the self and the attendant beliefs that writing can be a means of self-discovery and intellectual self-realization."[14] In response, zin/ography uses appropriated postmodern aesthetic practices to replace the modernist search for the autonomous self with a writing which demonstrates how the notion of the autonomous self is constructed.

As Ulmer suggests in *Teletheory*, pedagogy has always positioned itself in a "postmodern" way in that teachers have always ransacked the past for simulacrum of history that show us and thus

teach us 'how it was'; scholarship and lectures have always been a function of the quotation. Consider the construction of this dissertation--its arguments are built on the citation, the reference--Barthes, Landow, Ulmer, etc. Zin/ography foregrounds the postmodern nature of pedagogy by appropriating a pop practice to the job of schooling. This appropriation demonstrates the postmodern aesthetic as it crosses between areas of culture that are usually held apart. For instance, the fanzine is already a practice which links the fan writer's personal life to his/her entertainment life. To adapt this bridge to the domain of schooling is in effect to bring into contact yet another institution which is usually conceived as autonomous from both home life and entertainment culture.

Although we know that an "information society" increases the amount and kinds of writing demanded of people in occupations that require college educations, our School practices have done little to meet this need. "With the dispersal of employees of multinational corporations to many sites around the world," notes Faigley "the increase of people in service occupations related to government, banking, tourism, research, transportation, health care, and finance,

and the introduction of computer technologies that give many people access to data bases, word processing programs, and electronic mail, it is not surprising that the transition from Fordism to post-Fordism would place new demands on writing in the workplace.*[15] I am inventing zin/ography as an example of the kind of thinking we need to employ to meet these demands. The critical point I want to make with zin/ography is that although critique has enlightened people intellectually, it has failed to address their habits because it attempts to effect emancipation without engaging pleasure.

Zin/ography offers amateur writers a poetics partially appropriated from postmodern art which redirects their expectations as they invent. These poetics include transgressing classification systems, appropriating other texts, and using associational logics to forge new connections, as well as ironic quotation, staging, and framing. Zin/ography disengages curiosity from Truth and exploits aesthetics in order to stage the zin/ographer's place in the web of culture. As a machine which stages immanent critiques, zin/ography deconstructs representation from within in order to effect (educate) stereotypical thinking.

<u>Right Channel</u>

The Hermeneutic Impulse

Barthes' second meaning, that which he calls the symbolic level of meaning, is called forth by the hermeneutic impulse. By this term I mean to articulate our penchant for interpretation. Unlike the channel to the left, this discourse channel calls the hermeneutic impulse into question.

I would like to take a moment to look more closely at interpretation as a research strategy, and I should say at the outset that I am not against interpretation (although I will be citing Sontag's essay which bears just such a title). Rather than stand against interpretation, I would like to pressure a different question: what might another research strategy look like? In attempting to think about this question I believe it will be useful to better understand the nature of the hermeneutic impulse, and thus I turn to Sontag's essay.

I liken what Sontag calls interpretation to Barthes' understanding of symbolic meaning. In "The Third Meaning," Barthes

defines symbolic meaning "as that of signification. Its mode of analysis would be ... a second or neo-semiotics, open no longer to the science of the message but to the sciences of the symbol (psychoanalysis, economy, dramaturgy)." [16] Similarly, Sontag defines her use of the term interpretation as "a conscious act of the mind which illustrates a certain code, certain 'rules' of interpretation."[17] In these contexts, interpretation usually means translation: X really means A.

"Against Interpretation" argues that the overuse and overvaluing of interpretation as a research strategy results from overemphasizing content and in a catch-22, our myopic focus on interpretation sustains the fancy that content exists at all. Thus, this research strategy yields the following results:

"The still photograph is generally thought to announce itself as a direct transcription of the real precisely in its being a spatiotemporal fragment; or, on the contrary, it may attempt to transcend both space and time by contravening that very fragmentary quality. Sherman's photographs do neither of these. Like ordinary snapshots, they appear to be fragments; unlike those

snapshots, their fragmentation is not that of the natural continuum, but of a syntagmatic sequence, that is, of a conventional segmented temporality. They are like quotations from the sequence of frames that constitutes the narrative flow of film."[18]

"What cannot be dismissed is that these works are really beside the point. What cannot be dismissed is that these works exist in series, and in series they posit the self as a compendium of poses, derived from film, fashion, and advertising and constructed out of a repertoire of makeup tricks and the wardrobe of a practiced, secondhand store clothes horse who has never given anything away."[19]

"Professor Bunell is perhaps right to find Sherman interesting as an artist but not as a photographer. 'Our medium' as he describes it, restricted to photography as defined, practiced, and understood within the framework of art photography, has very little importance in Sherman's work. Her medium of photography--her use of it--is predicated rather on the uses and functions of photography in the mass media, be they in advertising, fashion, movies, pinups, or

magazines."[20]

"That Sherman is both subject and object of these images is important to their conceptual coherence. For the play of the stereotype in her work is a revelation of the artist herself as stereotypical. It functions as a refusal to understand the artist as a source of originality, a font of subjective response, a condition of critical distance from a world which it confronts but of which it is not a part."[21]

"For in Sherman's images, disguise functions as parody; it works to expose the identification of the self with an image as its dispossession in a way that appears to proceed directly from Jaques Lacan's fundamental tenet that the self is an Imaginary construct 'and that this construct disappoints all [the subject's] certitudes. For in the labor with which he undertakes to reconstruct this construct for another, he finds again that fundamental alienation which has made him construct it like another one, and which has always destined it to be stripped from him by another.'"[22]

Interpretation yields a very specific kind of understanding of Sherman's work, a point Rosalind Krauss articulates in *Cindy Sherman 1975-1993*. Krauss writes the text that accompanies Sherman's prints. In her text, Krauss is interested in the ways in which Sherman, "as de-myth-ifier" (or mythographer, like Barthes) is reconsumed as myth. She introduces her point by telling a very simple story of an art critic who "sees" a comparison between Sherman's work and actual films as evidence that Sherman is in the business of replicating "originals." The critic who understands the *Untitled Film Stills* as images taken from real films, argues Krauss, is actually in the grip of myth; he is consuming it. That is, he understands a direct connection to the signified-as-instance. One popular critical consumption of Sherman's work as myth produces the understanding that Sherman's signifieds are offered as instances of her deeper self. Here, the mythic content suggests that "it is the nature of the artist to organize 'messages that seem to tell us our nature and our fate'."[23] Buying into Sherman's characters, or understanding her girls as an allegory for the mythic unconscious of everyone (regardless of sex), marks another popular critical

consumption of Sherman's work as myth. This mythic content suggests that a shared fantasy obtains among us, that we are of a common cultural mind.

Of course, the interpretations of Sherman's work cited above are not really very sophisticated. Indeed, in many ways they are quite simple. Krauss, however, notes that it's not simplicity that is troubling, but rather the mythic understanding of the signified-as-instance. Laura Mulvey, she notes, one of the most respected and influential feminist film critics, reads Sherman's *Untitled Film Stills* as rehearsals of the structure of the male gaze. Referring to Mulvey's use of psychoanalytic theory, Krauss argues,

> And yet, we could say, it is this very theoretical armature that operates in such a description to put a mythic reading of the *Untitled Film Stills* in place, one that is not taking the trouble, indeed, to look under the hood. . . .Laura Mulvey . . . is buying into a signified-as-instance, a congealed sign, the semantic totality that reads 'woman-as-image', or again, 'woman as object of male gaze'.[24]

In these ways, notes Krauss, Sherman's Film Stills are repeatedly presented as either a text to be explained by analysis and/or a consequence of it; they are repeatedly caught in the trap of content articulated by Sontag.

"What kind of criticism of commentary on the arts is desirable today? For I am not saying that works of art are ineffable, that they cannot be described or paraphrased. They can be. The question is how. What would criticism look like that would serve the work of art, not usurp its place?"[25] asks Sontag. Such criticism (if it could still be called that, and I have my doubts) would pay more attention to form, for the "focus on content produces the arrogance of interpretation."[26] The merit of art, however, suggests Sontag, lies elsewhere than in its "meaning." What then might a research strategy be like that didn't consume Sherman (or anything else) as myth, that didn't understand her signifieds-as-instances, that didn't overemphasize content to the exclusion of all else? In her very provocative closing, Sontag suggests erotics as an alternative research strategy. How then might erotics function as a research strategy?

Photographic Sensibility

I might begin to answer Sontag's question by asking Krauss, "what is under the hood?" She responds: "What is under the hood is the signifier, the material whose very articulation conditions the

signified."[27] And then I recall Barthes' explication of the obtuse or third meaning as "a signifier without a signified." How might art fissure the very representation of meaning? How might erotics function as a research strategy? Perhaps a solution lies with the signifier. Krauss continues:

And further, working away under the hood, either *on* or *with* the signifier, is the effort perhaps to limit the possibility that it might produce a multiplicity of unstable signifieds and promote a 'sliding', or blurring among them or, on the other hand, to do the reverse and welcome or even facilitate such sliding. Limitation is the work of realism in novels and films: to every signifier, one and only one signified. Conversely, sliding and proliferation of meanings have always interested the anti-realist (what used to be called the *avant-garde*) artist.[28]

In "The Third Meaning," Barthes addresses the question of erotics noting an instance in an Eisensteinian film still in which he witnesses the fissuring of the representation of meaning. This fissuring, or third meaning, notes Barthes "seems to open the field of meaning totally, that is infinitely."[29] Again, the proliferation of meaning. Commenting directly on the Eisenstein still, Barthes

writes:

> It was then that I understood that the scandal, supplement or drift imposed on this classic representation of grief came very precisely from a tenuous relationship: that of the low headscarf, the closed eyes and the convex mouth; or rather, to use the distinction made by SME himself between 'the shadows of the cathedral' and 'the enshadowed cathedral', from a relation between the 'lowness' of the line of the headscarf, pulled down abnormally close to the eyebrows as in those disguises intended to create a facetious, simpleton look, the upward circumflex of the faded eyebrows, faint and old, the excessive curve of the eyelids, lowered but brought together as though squinting, and the bar of the half-opened mouth, corresponding to the bar of the headscarf and to that of the eyebrows metaphorically speaking 'like a fish out of water'.[29]

I note three things in Barthes' testimony. The scandal or drift of meaning is imposed on a "classic representation of grief"--that is, a stereotype. Barthes locates this drift in a rather "graphic" reading or viewing of the still: "the line of the headscarf . . . the upward circumflex of the faded eyebrows . . . the excessive curve of the eyelids . . . the bar of the half-opened mouth, *corresponding* to the bar of the headscarf and to that of the eyebrows." (emphasis added) In order to articulate his point Barthes "speaks" metaphorically, using a cliche: like a fish out of water.

I would like to take up this third point first. What is the effect of speaking in cliches, of using such scandalous language in a serious context? Why the comp/rhet imperative: avoid cliches (stereotypes of language)? Barthes suggests that such figures of speech are family to the third meaning. In their useless expenditure, in their obtuseness, if you will, this family sterilizes metalanguage (criticism):

> the obtuse meaning appears to extend outside culture, knowledge, information; analytically, it has something derisory about it: opening out into the infinity of language, it can come through as limited in the eyes of analytic reason; it belongs to the family of the pun, buffoonery, useless expenditure.[31]

Erotics, the fissuring of representation, suggests Barthes can begin only outside metalanguage.

That Barthes locates his primary example of the third meaning in a classic representation of grief suggests that stereotypes are useful for something beyond, or in addition to, the practices of postmodern art discussed in the left channel. If obtuse meanings can be found in stereotypes, perhaps they can be made to function in and through these "classic" figures as well.

How so is a question of a different order, but Barthes' graphic

scenario, and make you feel sullied by the touch of ocular contact."[34]

Shaviro presses on in this vein noting that in the *Untitled* series this quality extends from the visual to the visceral.

> These images leave you no room for detached, disinterested contemplation. They draw you into the scenario, and make you feel sullied by the touch of ocular contact.
>
> . . . And in this postmodern delirium, we are all more or less women. A decentered, tactile, polymorphous economy of the flesh replaces the old phallic and visual one. Irigaray's evocation of the fluidity, intimacy, tactility, and volume of female bodies corresponds with Marshall McLuhan's apprehension of the tactile, synesthetic qualities of the new electronic media. Every technological innovation, McLuhan says, implies a radical reordering of the human nervous system. Postmodern experience no longer conforms to the print-centered, phallocentric paradigm of a distanced, objectifying, linear, and perspectival vision. Now, in the age of video and computers, of genetic engineering and prosthetic surgery, the eye touches rather than sees; it immerses itself in the photograph, to be traversed by its erotic and emetic flows, and caressed and violated all along its surfaces.[35]

And I would suggest that the erotics of art, of the image, of writing, is indeed located in this rather obtuse move from the visual to the visceral.

description of the signifiers in the Eisenstein still points to a particular direction. By reading this still graphically, Barthes points out a pattern that neither the first nor second level meanings account for, or make use of--hence this pattern's excessiveness. Taking up the third meaning as a strategy then might mean encouraging such excessive patterns to drift throughout a work, not unlike Krauss' avant-garde artist.

I use a borrowed term, "photographic sensibility," in this project to signal such a third meaning strategy. Ray coins the term "photographic sensibility" while arguing that photography's promise as a highly tuned tool of classification was soon thwarted by it's relentless attention to detail. "By showing that every Spaniard was not dark, every banker not dull, photographs effectively criticized all classification systems and assured that any such system attempted in photography ... would inevitably appear not as science but as art."[32] Photographers found that the elusive (and unplanned) details of the image thwarted their attempts to control the meanings of their shots suggesting that photography was less like a positive science and more like art. In this context, Ray notes that these elusive details signal a certain lack of control; they instigate the

free play of meaning, the prizing of the signifier from the signified--they invoke delirium.

Recalling the case of Cindy Sherman, Steven Shaviro notes a delirious tendency in her photographs. Shaviro's response to Sherman's work suggests that interpretation (as documented by the left channel) is not the only way to approach her work. As if in response to something like Mulvey's psychoanalytic interpretation of Sherman's *Untitled Film Stills*, Shaviro charges

> You say that these women are suffering from 'lack', so that you can be the one to fulfill and complete them. But it doesn't work. You find that these images continually slip beyond your grasp, out of your possession. You can't get it up, you can't get the film projector up and running again, you can't supply the missing narratives that would release the trapped figures from their suspension. The stifling intimacy of these scenarios is such, that there can be no referential 'real' in which to anchor them, and no Archimedean point from which to regard them. These images lure you instead into a paralysis as great as their own, into the realm of the unspeakable, the unsayable.33

This unspeakable, unsayable quality which corresponds to no referential 'real' gestures against interpretation as the images slip beyond our grasp. Sherman's images disabuse their viewers of detached or disinterested contemplation: "They draw you into the

Composing

Ray suggests that photography was part of the same project as the *physiologies*: both attempt to make urban life more comfortable and legible. Unlike the *physiologies*, however, the technology of photography showed itself to be slightly out of control almost immediately; it continually captured and revealed fascinating irrelevancies and accidental details. In fact, contrary to popular belief, photography demonstrated that indeed it was not science but art. Subsequently, in cinema, the techniques of matching and centering became means of policing photography. Matching controlled the suture or edit between shots and centering directed the viewer's attention within the frame or *mise-en-scene*. Ray suggests that such policing of the image amounts to a subordination of the image to language. With this argument, Ray calls attention to the hermeneutic impulse of language--it's tendency to explain and thereby control the meaning of texts. Although the slippery-ness of language continually betrays this impulse, both scholars and teachers (and teacher scholars) try to use language to control meaning (think of the characteristics of a 'good' essay). So, it is not

language itself that tends toward control nor photography which tends toward play, both technologies (language and photography) possess similar potentials. Our historical use and experience of these technologies, however, teaches us something about the tension between the control and play of meaning. (In this sense I use "photographic sensibility" to differentiate between a tendency toward control and play--not essential qualities of language and photography. The invention of photography in the midst of a crisis of legibility merely serves to call our attention to play in what we imagine to be highly controlled uses of any technology. Currently, hypermedia poses a similar crisis of legibility.) The survey of critical responses cited above demonstrates that most critical responses to Cindy Sherman's photography attempt to control her image(s) with language.

A similar trend toward policing the screen is currently emerging in hypermedia. We are "naturally" assimilating the hermeneutic impulse (the desire to explain, to interpret) from print to electronic composition. Consider, for a moment, my experiences with an online journal:

Recently I produced a web version of the first chapter of my dissertation and submitted that web (*Being in Pictures*) to an online journal for publication and review. Although my experience of the editorial process went rather smoothly, I continually met requests for an explanation of what I was doing with/in my web. That is, although the editors and reviewers praised my work and claimed they enjoyed screening it, they wanted me to include meta-commentary on my web. I believe this desire to make me explain arose on their part because while my web does include both a practical (an online syllabus) and a theoretical aspect (a more provocative series of screens which juxtapose text and image), it did not include any form of explanation from the side-lines. In short, *Being in Pictures* demonstrates rather than explains its way of working.

I wonder, how do we even begin to gesture toward a photographic sensibility of hypermedia? Following Ray's lead, I understand the free play of the signifier to inform the term "photographic sensibility." In order to use this sensibility as method (a zin/ographic method), I deploy the elusive detail, or accidental signifiers that appear not only in photographs, but also in film, video

and hypermedia. That is, Ray's method of thinking about photography informs my thinking about hypermedia in this project. Just as Ray uses the term "photography" broadly to suggest a means of making sense, I want to consider what it means to think about hypermedia *photographically*. Surely, initial attempts at this style of thinking will be flawed, but so as not to sell ourselves short, we at least need to consider the possibilities erotics offer hypermedia when used in conjunction with hermeneutics. "What is at stake," asks Ray

> with this relationship between language and image? In the introduction I cited Walter Ong's argument that different technologies of communication occasion different ways of thinking. What are the consequences, characteristics, and modes of an age of photography, film, television, magnetic tape, and computers? How will what we call 'thinking' change with this technology?[36]

Notes

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2. Ray, Robert B. "Snapshots: The Beginnings of Photography," *The Avant-Garde Finds Andy Hardy*, (Cambridge: The Harvard University Press 1995).

3. Ray, 28.

4. Ray, 31.

5. Cindy Sherman, *Untitled Film Still*, 1978. Black-and -white photograph, 8x10" (21.3 x 26 cm). Collection Arthur and Carol Goldberg, New York (Photo: courtesy Metro Pictures).

6. Douglas Crimp, "Pictures," *Art After Modernism: Rethinking Representation*, eds. Brian Wallis and Marcia Tucker (New York: The New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1984) 181.

7. Craig Owens, "The Allegorical Impulse: Toward a Theory of Postmodernism," *Art After Modernism: Rethinking Representation*, eds. Brian Wallis and Marcia Tucker (New York: The New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1984) 233.

8. Roland Barthes, *S/Z*, trans. Richard Miller (New York: The Noonday Press, 1974) 98.

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12. Ihab Hassan, "The Culture of Postmodernism," *Theory, Culture, and Society* (2:3 198), 119-132.

13. *Fragments of Rationality*, 15.

14. *Fragments of Rationality*, 14.

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16. "The Third Meaning," 52-53.

17. Sontag, Susan, From "Against Interpretation," *Postmodernism: A Reader*, ed. Patricia Waugh (London: Edward Arnold, 1992) 50.

18. Crimp, 181.

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21. Krauss, Rosalind, "A Note on Photography and the Simulacral," *The Critical Image: Essays on Contemporary Photography*, ed. Carol Squiers (Seattle: Bay Press, 1990) 22.

22. Owens, 11.

23. Krauss, Rosalind, *Cindy Sherman 1975-1993* (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., 1993) 36.

24. *Cindy Sherman*, 56.

25. Sontag, 54.

26. Sontag, 54.

27. *Cindy Sherman*, 28.

28. *Cindy Sherman*, 28.

29. "The Third Meaning," 55.

30. "The Third Meaning," 57.

31. "The Third Meaning," 55.

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33. Shaviro, Stephen, "Cindy Sherman," *Doom Patrols*, (http://dhalgren.english.washington.edu/~steve/doom.html).

34. Shaviro.

35. Shaviro.

36. Ray, 37-38.

CHAPTER 5

STAGING THE IMAGE REPERTOIRE

One of the most salient differences between zine writing and
academic writing is that zines fetishize identification (and thereby
fetishize the socially constructed subject) while academic writing
effaces it. Zin/ography remedies this situation by adapting Roland
Barthes' theory and practice of the image-repertoire to the newly
emerging electronic literacy. What would academic writing be like
if instead of repressing identification it worked with it? Barthes
demonstrates two answers to this question in his later works: *A
Lover's Discourse* and the autobiography, *Roland Barthes.* In these
texts, Barthes theorizes ways of writing *with* identification. A
dissertation directed by hermeneutics or critique might use Barthes'
theory to analyze the fanzine. Instead this project approaches

Barthes' work heuretically using *A Lover's Discourse* to make a rhetoric or an interface for writing in electronic school.

Detachment

A Lover's Discourse shows me a way of writing with, rather than simply about, identification. While critical analysis tells me that my identifications write my subjectivity, Barthes suggests means other than critique's unveiling or uncovering for recognizing the work of ideology. Whereas the logic of argument strives to suppress identification so that the writer might gain the critical distance necessary to see how ideology catches him/her, Barthes suggests a method which detaches rather than distances the writer from his/her identifications. The strict (yet arbitrary) aesthetic patterning of *A Lover's Discourse* allows Barthes to write with his identifications in a detached way and thereby successfully demonstrates that critical distance is not the only means of managing a writer's identifications.

With *A Lover's Discourse*, Barthes dramatizes a familiar set of stereotypical poses: those of the lover. He suggests that we all identify with these poses whether we actually are or have been the

lover because these tropes have currency in the everyday workings of our culture. By dramatizing this "naturalized" language, Barthes shows us the reader as a discursive site (cultural tropes construct even what seem to be the very intimate scenes of our personal lives). Barthes' staging of one particular discourse allows us to see the lover as a stereotype that inhabits each of us. The staging of this stereotype then and invites us to speculate about others. Consider for a moment an adaptation of *A Lover's Discourse*: Scholes, Comely and Ulmer's experiment with The Fragment in *Textbook*. This adaptation asks the student writer to produce a set of fragments using the form of *A Lover's Discourse* to write a piece entitled *Fragments of a Student Discourse*. Students fill Barthes' structure with their own experiences (their own identifications); they "do for the student's life*style* what Barthes did for the lover's style of conduct."[1] Like Cindy Sherman's photographs, I find *A Lover's Discourse* pleasurable because it invites me to look at, laugh at, and seriously consider my stereotypical construction from a detached position. I am staged for myself; by working at my limits, I might recognize my potential for modifying them.

How does Barthes proceed? "The role of the aesthetic in our society," he suggests "must be turned to provide the rules of direct and transitive discourse".[2] Barthes writes *A Lover's Discourse* by such rules. By foregrounding form rather than content, Barthes privileges aesthetic over metalanguage and thereby produces a dramatization rather than an exposition of the socially constructed subject. By thinking the figures (stereotyped poses) of the lover's discourse with something else (disciplinary works and personal anecdotes), Barthes creates an aesthetic and generative method for conducting humanities research. This method of cross-thinking allows Barthes to access ideas he might otherwise be incapable of thinking. Similarly, zin/ography accepts the logic of aesthetics as a way of making theory. The fanzine form determines the shape rather than the content of zin/ography. Instead of theorizing writing in terms of the discourse of a lover in order to write a book, I am theorizing writing in terms of the discourse of fandom in order to write in an electronic school. In this chapter, I compare *A Lover's Discourse* and fan writing for the pattern between them. From this pattern I extrapolate the method or five steps that direct zin/ographic writing.

How does Barthes write with identification? I can identify four operations:

(1) Barthes extrapolates from a special and familiar kind of writing: the stereotypical discourse of lovers. He uses this familiar discourse to generate a theory of (how to write with) identification while simultaneously staging that theory. As a theory about a special kind of writing, A Lover's Discourse does not suggest that we collapse critical distance or tell us how to collapse critical distance. Barthes theorizes a discourse already in collapse, or rather, a discourse never separate or separated from itself. The lover's discourse, a non-academic discourse or lay discourse, remains "severed not only from authority, but also from the mechanisms of authority, (sciences, techniques, arts)."[5] The lover's discourse is a popular discourse.

Unlike the hermeneut who interprets, the lover-subject (or the writer-subject) writes not about his/her symptoms but rather voices "what is 'unreal' i.e. intractable."[3] The symptom, a sign that represents a part of the whole, implies a metalanguage; the lover's discourse is inseparable from the lover. The writer-lover cannot

and does not stand outside him/herself to write. In the discourse of the lover no metalanguage distances the subject from the symptom. The discourse is no representation, no example, but rather a dramatization, a gesture, the thing itself. The lover's discourse remains separate from other discourses because "It is completely forsaken by the surrounding languages: ignored, disparaged, or derided by them, severed not only from authority but also from the mechanisms of authority."[4] The discourse of lovers is a special discourse written from within itself, from within the sway of desire. Barthes writes A Lover's Discourse (in a learned way) from within this sway.

Because certain discourses always already collapse critical distance (in effect, critical distance is an impossibility), engaging them does not mean applying a technique to effect such a collapse; but rather learning what these discourses that lack critical distance might offer the humanities; how do I learn to write with them? Barthes shows me how to exploit the pedagogical potential of this lack. Adapting Barthes' technique, I write zin/ography from within the sway of my desire.

(2)   Barthes dramatizes, rather than explains, the lover's discourse. He stages. This technique allows him to write and perform a theory of identification simultaneously. By staging the lover's image-repertoire, Barthes theorizes an intractable discourse; he makes knowledgeable a discourse that argument cannot reach. Similarly, zin/ography stages its author's image-repertoire (which is to say the stereotypes) through the practices of fan writing. Zin/ography directs me to use my fandom as a dowsing rod for my identifications. Who (or what) am I a fan of? Courtney Love (for instance). How do I identify? Through her feminine beauty, her feminism, her fandom, and her struggle for credibility. These are the stereotypes that hail me (and many others). Zin/ography makes my fan discourse knowledgeable by staging it as electronic literacy (both on and offline).

Barthes stages his (the lover's) image-repertoire. What are the operations of staging? Consider the figure "to understand".[6] The lover explains that s/he speaks with the substance s/he wants to know; love speaks the discourse of love. To stage the image-repertoire, investigate the "object of study" from within its ideological discourse. Barthes' figures are stereotypical tropes;

they are the discourse of the culture, of me. I identify with this image-repertoire. (In fact, any person in the culture can say "yes, that's it" to the figure; personal experience is irrelevant -- rather cultural experience is at hand.) Barthes dramatizes rather than exposes. The site of an affirmation (not an argument) the lover's discourse testifies to the "unreal" and intractable. The lover's discourse is illegitimate (unsanctioned by mechanisms of authority).

While staging is reflective, it is never reflexive. *A Lover's Discourse* excludes any logic requiring languages exterior to one another; according to Barthes, the lover's discourse grabs the concept "love" *by the tail* -- as it remains scattered throughout the image-repertoire. We never fully trap such discourse under the microscope of interpretation. *Reflectivity*, Barthes proposes, moves consciousness-raising in academic writing away from argumentation and towards a new practice: "no longer to unmask, no longer to interpret, but to make consciousness a drug".7 What might happen? Reactive ideologies might disappear and consciousness might be transformed by abolishing the bifurcation manifest and latent. We might privilege the unconscious and the conscious *without suppressing one in favor of the other.*

(3) Barthes writes about himself -- distractedly. Rather than accede only one possibility: to be engulfed by identification, Barthes proposes fascination as the extreme of detachment. From within his/her fascination, the lover reads the cause of desire without understanding anything about it; fascination abstracts identification. Thus, the lover need not know exterior systems (need not obtain critical distance) before reading him/herself. I begin reading myself from within -- as if in *relief*. Fascination makes desire unfamiliar, uncanny -- me, but not me. To obtain the uncanny, I distract or detach myself (how else not to recognize yet to remain familiar with myself?) What distracts? -- the trivial -- an association. For instance the dream work often uses a trivial association to displace the dreamer's interests so as to distract him/her from waking. The lover's discourse moves through the image-repertoire (the screen of fascination) via an associational logic: the intractable logic of aesthetics.

Rather than be engulfed by my identification, I write with the logic of association, turning fascination into an "object," a separated part of the self: both exterior and interior. Following

trivial leads, associative logic constantly displaces the possibility of being engulfed. "Laying My Cards on the Table" forced my discourse to follow the allusive leads of cliches. These leads continually frame and reframe my fascination for my own gaze effecting uncanny recognition.

(4) Barthes constructs formulaic and generalizable figures which he fills with specific references from his own life. These references function as asides to the love story itself (which in an interesting reversal remains off-stage, in the wings). Marginal markers point to the sources used by the writer to construct his/her asides, but refrain from arguing or proving their connection or their status as support. Working with his repertoire, Barthes composes his version of the lover's discourse out of Goethe's *Werther*, various psychoanalytic and philosophic texts, and personal experiences such as correspondences and conversations. The arbitrary yet unswerving alphabetic structure which orders these meditations allow radically different "orders of knowledge" to inform one another metonymically. Analogically, I explore the circulation of my identifications through the pop cycle. I stage four stereotypes of my

fandom in the four discourse domains, composing 16 fragments woven together with cliches.

Barthes' discourse represents an expert discourse on writing with identification. Most of us, however, are not experts in this field. Because our schooling neglects and devalues such discourse, we never learn how to write with identification. Fanzines, however, suggest an amateur approach. Fan writing develops as a community practice in response to entertainment. Whereas Barthes' writing alienates our students, fan writing, as a native or "indie" practice, recognizes them. In this sense, fan writing provides a familiar switchpoint through which Barthes' theory might be channeled. Where the student experience is concerned, academic writing is an alienating drudgery concerned only with foreign practices. Students associate fan writing, however, with pleasure and familiarity. Recall Williamson's discovery of her son's enthusiasm for fan writing. Zin/ography captures the pleasure associated with fan writing by channeling that pleasure into pedagogical practice.

Fan Writing

Rather than being conceptualized as a singular relationship between an audience and a privileged primary text, fandom should be conceived of as a set of cultural practices, a social configuration, a type of discursive logic that knits together a number of fannish interests across textual and generic boundaries. 8

Most zines start out with the realization that one need no longer be merely a passive consumer of media. Everyone can be a producer! That's the underlying message of the zine world, and the greatest thing about zines.9

In *The World of Zines: A Guide to the Independent Magazine Revolution*, authors Mike Gunderloy and Cari Goldberg Janice explain that zines are small publications produced primarily for love rather than money. What kind of love do they mean? --not romantic love but the love that attends to fan interest. Zines occur at the intersection of three forces: the technological revolution, the desire for expression, and instances of cultural tension. This tension betrays fan writers' illegitimate status in the cultural economy and their recognition of their disenfranchisement. "There are many reasons for publishing various kinds of zines," note Gunderloy and Janice, "but there is an overall purpose: people are building networks

independent of big business, big government, and big media."[10] The zine world operates as a kind of social glue, a network of networks.

Fanzines are self-published mini-magazines. People often truncate the term (an obvious hybrid: fan + magazine=fanzine) to zine; the terms are interchangeable. Although early use of the term fanzine described the self-published independent magazines of science fiction fans (they stood in opposition to the "prozines" which actually paid for work), the proliferation of the zine movement into various areas of interest has broadened the meaning of the term. Fanzines no longer focus solely on traditional objects of fandom (popular music, film and television, sports, etc.). Currently, fanzines address a plethora of topics and issues which maintain some similarity only in that they engage the intense interest of their readers and writers; most are highly idiosyncratic in nature. In fact, fanzines can be about anything at all that interests their readers and writers.

"Zines," notes Williamson, " are usually controversial and even shocking, covering the gamut of topics from music to television with every sort of pop culture and political faction represented."[11]

Why do they shock? Primarily because they ignore the comfortable and traditional rules of publication which govern everything from spatial layout on the page to the use of graphics and a focused topic. As low budget productions, most typical zines strive for a home-made look, an indie[12] aesthetic rather than the slick aesthetic of glossy magazines. They rely on computers and copy machines for publication. Blurred boundaries between graphics and texts as well as heteroglossic voices most often signal this indie aesthetic. Multiply layered text and graphics, not to mention slang language and expletives, shock the traditions of verbal and visual good taste. The inclusion of such "everyday language" (slang, colloquial phrasing, etc.) challenges the basic rules of "good writing." Noting the low-tech, low-brow quality of these publications, one *New York Times* article refers to zines as the print equivalent of cable access TV.

Fan writing represents the semiotic and cultural productivity of popular audiences.[13] The oral discourse surrounding both the collective reading and viewing of popular texts characterizes fan culture. These characterizations include the translation of popular texts into new texts which more readily serve fan interests, the generation of a sense of proprietorship with respect to popular

culture texts, and the celebration of intense emotions. A self-
motivated social practice (unlike most academic writing) fan
writing opens a door for students of cultural studies onto a
relatively unstudied site of postmodern *bricolage* and
antidisciplinary heteroglossia.

<u>Selective Memory</u>

Henry Jenkins documents fandom as both ethnographer and fan.
His work documenting and analyzing fan writing provides a rich
source of information about both fandom as a cultural phenomenon
and fan writing as a discursive practice. Jenkins adapts De
Certeau's theory of the practice of everyday living to his analysis of
fanzines, reading them as people's ideological reworkings of media
texts. My project differs. Instead of using De Certeau's thinking as a
means to *understand* something about the fanzine phenomenon, I
interface Barthes' theory of identification with my reading of
fanzines as a recipe for making other texts. This project uses fan
writing to invent a pedagogical practice, a rhetoric for electronic
school, and while Jenkins' ethnographic documentation and analysis
provides a valuable source for the project at hand, I approach fan

writing with radically different intentions. Turning away from ethnography, this study looks to fan writing as a scene of instruction. Jenkins' work proves useful because it delineates and analyzes the practices of fan writing. From his research, I cull the practices of fan writing appropriate to an electronic rhetoric. Recall that for academic writing to function like fan writing in an electronic school, it must stage rather than suppress identification. How, then, does fan writing stage identification?

Jenkins argues against the theory that spectator identification with fictional characters and situations ensnares viewers in the text's ideological web. Although fans are somewhat ideologically complicit, fannish identity is highly discursive; fans choose to identify with certain characters or parts of texts while discarding others. For instance, much fan fiction has centered around the *Star Trek* character of Uhura. Never more than a minor support character in the Star Trek series, Uhura takes center stage with certain fans. Often, the textual elements which maintain intense fan identification differ from those which attempt to position the casual viewer in response to the taken-for-granted assumptions structuring the original text; fans often identify with the incidental

elements in a text rather than the main characters or main issues. For instance, a zine inspired by Courtney Love might dismiss Courtney's most noted characteristics: being Kurt Cobain's junky wife/widow.

Jenkins also describes fans as nomadic scavengers who take what they need leaving the rest behind. In their raids on dominant culture, fans often rewrite and reconceptualize source material. Fan writing restructures the material into texts which more readily reflect fan interest and identifications. "The ideological wedding of character world view and fannish perspective," explains Jenkins, "is not based exclusively on textual subject positioning but also depends on the larger social positioning of the fan."[14] Just because the producers and writers of *Star Trek* always positioned Uhura as nonconsequential in the eyes of her shipmates, doesn't mean that fan writing mimics this positioning. Fan writing often repositions Kirk and Spock critically while reconfiguring Uhura as a strong feminist.

Fan writing's heteroglossic voices allow fans to maintain liminal relationships with varied subject positions. Rather than present him/herself as a unified rational subject, fan writing allows the fan to traverse "widely divergent ideological systems,

claiming a number of openly contradictory subject positions without fully assimilating any of them into a long-term belief system."[15] A single fanzine might contain a fiction piece which reconfigures Uhura as a militant feminist, a poem which casts her as a traditional romantic heroine, and a filk song which questions the US military machine. The fanzine form supports various ideological identifications and reconfigurations simultaneously.

Conversely, academic writing uses critical distance to establish authors as autonomous rational subjects. In his book *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, Pierre Bourdieu explains that critical distance promises neutrality because it releases readers from the influence of textual producers. The reader maintains critical distance so as not to let his/her passion for the text rule his/her judgement. This way of thinking suggests that emotional distance, a distancing from the body, aids rational comprehension; identification with the text clouds and disrupts rational comprehension. Because the measure of critical distance often delineates high from low art, Bourdieu argues that academia's promotion of rational thought binds it to bourgeois taste's revulsion to the body. The low arts engage the reader's body (or emotions);

they invite or encourage identification. The high arts engage the intellect, inviting reflection. Because any eruption of or from the body destabilizes rational categories, critical distance promises a rational neutrality that impassioned identification cannot afford.

Because they lack critical distance, Jenkins notes that fans are often pejoratively labelled as overly involved in specific texts or performers -- as if that relationship could encapsulate their entire social identities. I turn this rather arrogant way of thinking around. I wonder if people's social identities might be entered via this stereotypical image. Zin/ography instructs me to use the fan relationship already analyzed and theorized by cultural studies as a door onto/into my social identity. In this spirit, *Inventing Zin/ography* adapts Jenkins' definition of fandom as a guiding principle:

> Rather than being conceptualized as a singular relationship between an audience and a privileged primary text, fandom should be conceived of as a set of cultural practices, a social configuration, a type of discursive logic that knits together a number of fannish interests across textual and generic boundaries.16

Testing this idea, I generated "Laying My Cards on the Table" out of my fan identification with Courtney Love. In that composition, I look

to various manifestations of fan writing as cultural practices which express not only a specific social configuration but also a discursive logic that differs radically from that of academic writing. In addition, I adapt these practices and this logic to the work of schooling by transforming the practices of fan writing into an interface for electronic school.

The Text: Pulling It Close

Bourdieu shows critical distance's promise of neutrality to be a lie. Rather than release readers from the dominance of individual textual producers, critical distance pulls readers into the logic of a particular system of textual production and consumption. From within this system fans appear aberrant and misguided for they stage themselves as socially situated rather than as rational autonomous subjects. Fan writing both permits and invites the staging of multiple identifications.

While academic writing provides one way of making sense of cultural experiences; fandom provides another. Jenkins argues that both refusal and resistance characterize fan writing. Fan writing challenges cultural hierarchies by adopting both low and high culture

texts and discursive practices to its production. Fan writing rejects aesthetic distance by effacing the boundary between text and reader. Blurring the distinctions between individual texts, genres and media, fan writing defies the conventional conceptions of literary property and the distinction between readers and writers fades away. In addition, fan writing refuses to respect the boundary between fantasy and reality by attempting to integrate media content into everyday social experiences. Jenkins explains: "Fans differ not simply in the degree of their attachment to media, but also in the kinds of reading strategies they employ, strategies that are quite unlike the interpretive skills taught in schools."[17] Unlike the focus required by academic writing, many kinds of fan activity allow for the temporary acceptance of alternative ideas and exploration of new social configurations.

Fan writing, because it issues forth from intense attraction, erupts from the body threatening rational thought. "For the fan," notes Jenkins, "the most skilled of all textual poachers, mastery over the text comes not from holding it at a distance but rather from pulling it close, internalizing its meanings and making them one's own. Consumption here may be understood not simply as the

acceptance or comprehension of textual meanings but rather as their ingestion and digestion, a process that reconstitutes them in a new form that serves the fan's own interests."[18] Jenkins' bodily metaphors illustrate the difference fan writers pose to academic writers. Rather than use distance to control the text, fans use proximity to transform the text.

Transforming Texts

How do fan writers transform texts? Jenkins describes fandom as a scavenger culture formed by nomadic raids on dominant culture. Fan writing, the diverse forms of which include filk music (a version of folk music), fanzines, videos, and webzines, is an instance of postmodern *bricolage*. Fans construct their own experiences by taking bits and pieces of various texts and rearranging these borrowed materials in new ways to express a number of different interests. In fact, fans transform cultural texts with their writing. For instance, slash writers transform the often homosocial relationships of male media characters into homoerotic relationships that challenge the ideology of gender difference.

In her article, "How to Watch Star Trek," Cassandra Amesley argues that fans manage such ideologic textual manipulations by engaging in a kind of "double viewing"[19]; they understand media texts or characters as at once real and constructed. Jenkins suggests that "it is this distance from the reality of the text that helps to explain how fans can pull the text close to them and still remain at least partially free of its ideological demands."[20] Ironically, the closeness fans feel motivates the reworking and reappropriating of materials. "The fans' ability to play with the ideological norms of the text," asserts Jenkins "is a power that comes from a relationship at once removed from and close to the represented world -- a power that originates simultaneously in proximity and distance."[21] For example, as *Star Trek* fans rework the cultural myths of The New Frontier and Manifest Destiny, these myths gain a progressive edge; they often become vehicles for anti-militaristic rhetoric or critiques of consumer culture. Because fans create through appropriation and juxtaposition, they "do not exist outside of ideology--neither textual ideology nor larger social

structures--but rather they exist in dialogue with ideology, struggling against aspects of texts that run counter to their own social interests and cultural pleasures, contesting elements that contradict their larger social experience."[22] The fan draws the text close not to be more fully possessed by it, but to more fully possess it.

Fandom's scandalous nature sparks my interest -- particularly the means by which fan writing manipulates the stereotypes of fan identification.   Jenkins argues that the fan also calls into question the logic by which others order aesthetic experiences; the fan refuses to read by the rules imposed by traditional schooling. "One becomes a 'fan' not by being a regular viewer of a particular program but by translating that viewing into some cultural activity, by sharing feelings and thoughts about the program content with friends, by joining a 'community' of other fans who share common interests."[23]   Zine production constitutes just such a cultural activity.   Media fan writing, notes Jenkins, is an almost exclusively feminine response to mass media texts. Why so many women writers? Because they have to transform masculine texts (texts written by men for male pleasure) in order to produce feminine

pleasure. Female characters largely exist in the margins of the media's male centered narratives.

Slash provides a clear example of the radical ideological reworking media texts receive from fan writing. The sound of the word "slash" itself evokes an aggressive pleasure with ripping traditional boundaries which for some fans signals an act of breaking traditional feminine roles. Slash, as a term, specifies a genre of fan production; it refers to the convention of using a stroke to signify same sex relationships between characters. This writing imagines freely chosen and fully conscious sex between equals while questioning the representation of sexuality in popular culture. Slash marks a scandalous forbidden zone of pleasure by turning a subtext (of male homosocial desire) into the dominant focus of new texts. In *Textual Poachers* Jenkins identifies three basic premises of slash fiction: movement from male homosocial desire to direct expression of homoerotic passion, exploration of alternatives to traditional masculinity, and insertion of sexuality into a larger social context.

Slash fiction represents a reaction against the construction of male sexuality on television and in pornography by inviting us to imagine something akin to the liberating transgression of gender

hierarchy, a refusal of fixed-object choices in favor of fluid erotic identifications, and a refusal of predetermined gender characteristics in favor of play with androgynous possibilities. "Slash is not so much a genre about sex as it is a genre about the limitations of traditional masculinity and about reconfiguring male identity."[24] Zin/ography appropriates the slash to a broader context than that articulated by Jenkins and Penley. The slash of zin/ography signals a challenge to the various cultural stereotypes that hail me, not just those of male heterosexuality.

Constance Penley uses the term "guerilla erotics" to articulate the transformation that slash proposes. She borrows this way of thinking from De Certeau who defines tactics as guerilla actions involving hit and run acts of apparent randomness. Rather than attempt to overturn a system, tactics turn forces that traditionally exclude and marginalize a group to that group's own ends. These tactics, notes Penley, are a *way of thinking*; intelligence is inseparable from everyday struggles and the pleasures that it articulates. Such tactics produce a making do, or *bricolage*; the process combines already heteroglossic elements. "It is not a synthesis that takes the form of an intellectual discourse about an

object; the form of its making do is its intelligence."[25]   Science

fiction slash remains popular because of the range and complexity of

discourses possible in a genre of romantic porn radically shaped and

reworked by science fiction.   K/S slash is "a stimulating social space

in which women can manipulate the products of mass-produced

culture to stage a popular debate around issues of technology,

fantasy, and everyday life."[26]   Finding alternative and unexpected

ways of thinking and speaking about women's relations to new

technologies of science, the body, and the mind are central to K/S fan

writing.   K/S writing retools masculinity while staging an immanent

critique of the sexual status quo.

Penley argues that female fans use the writing and reading of

slash to play with different identificatory positions.   The narrational

structures characteristic of slash fiction reflect pleasure in

identifying multiply.   Slash often plays with shifting points of view

and the construction of shared subjectivities.   In K/S zines, the

Vulcan Mind Meld provides Kirk and Spock one another's points of

view.   The play with identifications extends beyond the slash fiction,

however, into the circulation of slash.   Slash writers often use

humorous pseudonyms which comment on the critical nature of slash (such as "The PTL Club" and "The Fifth Amendment" as well as "Betina Sheets") and allow one person to write under many names. The use of pseudonyms allows for the construction of loosely secured alternate identities (they're often known yet cloaked). Fan writers also use pseudonyms to move between fandoms or genres as well as styles or moods.

The Poetics of Fan Writing

In *Heuretics*, Ulmer uses the term "pop cycle" to describe Althusser's notion that institutional state apparatuses confer identity by interpellating individuals through social practices. The relationships between the institutions of Family (or Home), Entertainment, School, and Discipline constitute the pop cycle of ideology. Each institution articulates the ideology of the culture with its own discourse (including the logic, genres, modes, and forms relevant to the function of that discourse within society). Appropriating Ulmer's pop cycle shows me another way of imagining this project. Zin/ography teaches me to stage my interpellations; to put my own stereotypes in relief, I must write from the four domains

of the pop cycle at once. "Laying My Cards on the Table" stages my identification with Courtney Love: feminine beauty, feminism, fandom, and credibility. Ulmer argues that putting the pop cycle in motion facilitates exchanges between institutions that usually remain separate (between the clusters Home/Entertainment and School/Discipline). Such exchanges might not only suggest provocative ways of working for the humanities, but they might also clearly articulate the relevance of humanities research to our students as well as the public.

The pop cycle suggests that, as an aspect of daily life, the fanzine bridges the domains of home and entertainment. In *Television Culture*, John Fiske explores other bridges (such as gossip or playground games) to demonstrate that people are perfectly capable of importing fragments of popular culture into their own lives without being wholly dominated or manipulated by the ideology of those texts. Fiske demonstrates that people easily adapt what seems to be the radically overdetermined ideology of popular texts to their own uses (they slash popular texts), often reading against the grain of the text's ideological positioning. In so doing, television viewers traverse the bridge between the domains of home and

entertainment. Fan writing functions similarly. Like the gossip of television viewers, fan writing moves between the domains of home and entertainment. Fan writing's intense stylization and conscious construction, however, differentiate it from less carefully articulated bridgings such as gossip. Fan writing turns the kinds of bridges built by gossip or individually situated readings into a postmodern art form with a highly developed aesthetic. Zin/ography makes this bridge explicit by augmenting it into a method for learning in the humanities. If fan writing can be used to write home and entertainment texts, can't it also be used to write school and discipline texts?

By adapting cultural studies' knowledge of the relationship between fans and popular texts to a pedagogical practice, zin/ography connects cultural studies' intellectual activity to the sources of popular pleasure. Fan writing offers cultural studies a way to practice its knowledge of cultural identifications; it tells us what to do with what we already know by preserving the ability to be critical without foreclosing the affective intensity and fascination that attract people to cultural texts in the first place. In order to answer this project's leading question: what would fan writing be

like as academic writing in electronic school, I need to know the poetics of fan writing. Reading these poetics analogically, I extrapolated the poetics of zin/ography by keeping the strategies for writing with identification already drawn from *A Lover's Discourse* in mind. How might fan writing, as a particular practice or staging of identification, align with Barthes' "instructions"? I culled the following list of practices from Jenkins' analyses:

1. Fan writers blur the distinction between reading and writing.
2. The viewing stance of the fan writer is at once ironically distant and playfully close.
3. Fan writing recontextualizes the source text.
4. Fan writing refocuses its audience's attention, shifting attention away from primary and onto secondary figures.
5. Fan writing shifts the genre of the source text.
6. Fan writing concerns itself with fragments of the source text.
7. Fan writing crosses the boundaries between different source texts and genres.
8. Fan writing dislocates figures from one source text into another.
9. Fan writing personalizes the text; it effaces the gap between the realm of the writer's experience and that of the source text.
10. Fan writing reworks the ideology of the source text.

The poetics of fan writing concern not only "form and content" but also production processes. Discipline knowledge assumes that people are mostly unaware of their collective identity (ideological formation) but that the methods of hermeneutics and critique, packaged as academic writing, can make them aware of this construction. What to do when, as Barthes points out, critique becomes our collective identity?--when critique becomes dogma? Is there a way, other than critique, to become aware of our collective identity? Jenkins suggests there is. Fan writing is a social activity which functions simultaneously as a form of personal expression and as a source of collective identity. To call yourself a fan is to be aware, in at least one instance, of your collective identity; it is to name your collective identity. Fan writing, then offers an alternative method to critique. What about fans' activities makes them aware of their collective identity? How do they make themselves aware from within the sway of desire? These are the practices I appropriate to zin/ography.

An art of making do, fan writing transforms materials borrowed from mass culture into new texts. This "poaching,"[27] is not just a vocabulary of tactics but rather an art with an aesthetic

sensibility and poetics. Evoking a field of associations, fan writing presents dense layers of meaning which are simultaneously readable (at varying levels of complication) to experts and novices. In general, the poetics of fan writing are postmodern; they include selection, inflection, juxtaposition, and the recirculation of ready-made images and discourses emphasizing borrowing and recombination as much as or more than original creation and artistic invention.

With the proliferation of internet writing comes a new form of fan writing: webzines. Webzines combine the practices and techniques of paperzines with the multimedia capabilities of the World Wide Web. For example, *The Bionic Page*, which focuses on both *The Six Million Dollar Man* and *The Bionic Woman*, offers visitors a Bionic FAQ (frequently asked questions) and an episode guide--texts you might expect to find in paperzines--as well as Bionic Images (clips from the television series) and sound clips from the series' theme songs--texts which rely on the multimedia capabilities of many networked computers.

Like their more traditional counterparts, webzines appropriate the aesthetic techniques of postmodern art. Where webzines are

concerned, however, appropriation occurs not only within the text of the documents themselves, but also between the documents--in the links between them. I found *The Bionic Page* linked to a page in the first issue of Crystal Kile's *Girls Can Do Anything*--a zine published in both paper and electronic versions. I found "The Bionic Woman vs. The Six Million Dollar Man" in issue #1 of *GCDA*. This piece focuses on the sexism present in these shows and their marketing licenses (toys, etc.). Kile's piece pays particular attention to the ideological construction and placement of The Bionic Woman using licenses pitched to little girls such as the Bionic Beauty and Repair Station as examples. Kile's critique/celebration (for, in the end, it is both simultaneously) links to *The Bionic Page*, a commemoration of the bionic phenomenon. In this instance, the link itself serves to contextualize and inform both documents. The first time I experienced *GCDA* online, there was no link to *The Bionic Page*. At that time, Kile's article read like not much more than an academic analysis of the bionic phenomenon. My most recent visit to the page, however, highlighted the celebratory quality of Kile's identification in a way my initial visit or experience of the paperzine did not. During this most recent visit, I focused on Kile's reaction to finding

her Bionic Beauty and Repair Station in her parents' attic. She writes "'Omigod! What a perfect, perfect illustration of the contradictions that we Third Wave Feminist girls/Generation X girls grew up having to negotiate!'"[28] clearly articulating her identification with the sexism of the bionic phenomenon. Kile appropriates *The Bionic Page* into the nexus of her zine not by citing it or by "reprinting" it, but by linking or pointing to it. By appropriating *The Bionic Page* in this fashion, Kile recontextualizes not only her document, but *The Bionic Page* as well.

The World Wide Web offers zine writing the link thereby not only providing access to different kinds and amounts of contextualization but also working to bridge the divide between the discourse domains of entertainment, home, and discipline. Kile's *GCDA* provides a perfect example of this bridge as her zine, a series of rather Discipline influenced documents, links to Home and Entertainment documents such as *The Bionic Page* which "contains" the "Bionic Crisis," a piece of fan fiction. Kile's zine also links her analysis of the "Yoko-ing" of Courtney Love to a page on the "mysterious" circumstances surrounding Kurt Cobain's suicide. This page houses a private detective's notes on the erratic and unusual

behavior of both Kurt and Courtney the week of his suicide; it suggests that Courtney murdered Kurt both for money and because he may have wanted to divorce her. Unlike the "neutral" link to *The Bionic Page* (called *"The Bionic Page"*), Kile labels this link "Kurt Didn't Suicide, That Bitch Killed Him" clearly contextualizing Kile's viewer's visit to the "Murder Investigation Page." Kile's sharp analysis of the culture's love/hate relationship with Courtney Love infuses Discipline discourse with that of Entertainment. She writes/rants:

> By fucking with the constructedness of "femininity" by (in)articulately mixing sharply smart rage with a carefully unkempt Edie Sedgwick madness, and the opportunities afforded her by her rather privileged, liberal background, she [Love] has synthesized the bleached-blonde public persona of the AntiMadonna and the *UberCyndiLauper*.[29]

The murder investigation page, however, is simply the stuff of entertainment as the PI narrates his interactions with Cobain's friends and family. The link between the two documents forms a discursive bridge allowing each to inform the other. Webzines are interesting in part because they facilitate exchanges between the discourse domains of the pop cycle even more readily than paperzines. While paperzines form a bridge between the domains of

Home and Entertainment, webzines often introduce Disciplinary discourse as well. Most likely, the phenomenon occurs because of the ready access many students of cultural studies have to the World Wide Web. In this situation, Discipline discourse not only infects the discourses of Home and Entertainment, but vice versa, the discourses of Home and Entertainment infect Discipline discourse. Zin/ography turns the pop cycle one more time bringing the discourse of School into contact with Home, Entertainment, and Discipline .

Zin/ography

My hypothesis is that I can write an immanent critique for electronic literacy by selecting the practices of fan writing and *A Lover's Discourse* which correspond to the educational potential of an electronic school. *A Lover's Discourse* is a theory of writing with identification and a discipline practice. Fan writing is a pop practice which engages the discourses of home and entertainment. Simultaneously, both *A Lover's Discourse* and the poetics of fan writing are aesthetic instances of electronic literacy; they mimic the logic of the electronic. The correspondences among the three discourses show me what are likely to be the most generative

techniques for inventing zin/ography. I proceed by comparing the poetics of fan writing to Barthes' theory for writing with identification and to the characteristics of electronic school; from this mix I extrapolate the zin/ographic procedure. My result: a deconstructive writing that employs deconstruction as invention rather than a style of criticism.

Practice 1: Write your fascinations. Stage the image-repertoire of your fandom.

Barthes composes *A Lover's Discourse* of recognizable figures which blur the distinction between reader and writer. The reader who can always say "yes, yes, that's it!" behaves as both reader and writer. Barthes' staging of the image-repertoire invites this reader to fill the figures with his/her own details. This invitation subverts the traditional teacher/student::writer/reader hierarchy by suggesting that the teacher is not the (only) one who knows; the student knows (recognizes the figure just as readily) the specifics of his/her identification in a way the teacher cannot. As Trinh T. Minh-ha insists, "the claim of identity is often a strategic claim"[30]

which allows students to critically understand that the personal is political.

Because I identify with Courtney Love, I chose to begin researching my image-repertoire through her. For *Laying My Cards on the Table* I note all of the things about her that fascinate me. What fan knowledge do I have of Courtney? Courtney is famous for two things: she's a hard punk musician and she is the widow of Kurt Cobain, the lead singer of break-through grunge band Nirvana. They have a little girl named Frances Bean.

Courtney has been around the American alternative scene for quite some time now. I first remember seeing her in the film *Sid and Nancy* -- a drama about the relationship between the Sex Pistols' bass player Sid Vicious and his partner Nancy Spungen. Courtney had a very small part in this film. Playing a friend in New York, Courtney tells Nancy to leave the washed up, wasted Sid.

Courtney comes from a fairly wealthy yet eclectic family. She inherited some sort of trust fund which allowed her to emancipate very early. I think she may have been 15 or 16 when she (legally) left her family. Her money allowed her to travel around a lot while still quite young. She completed several semesters of college study

at a handful of very good schools and was brilliant, although the courses she took never followed any established plan of study. She jokes that if you were to add up all of the academic credits she's earned at various schools, she would have hours equivalent to four degrees. Her main academic interests lie in philosophy, art, and literature. After leaving her family, Courtney worked as a stripper in some clubs on the West coast.

In relationship to Kurt Cobain, Courtney has been yoko-ed by many music fans. That is, many of Kurt's fans blame Courtney for his problems -- as if she brought him down the way many Beatles fans believe(d) that Yoko Ono brought John Lennon down. The yoko-ing of Courtney is so intense that some people suggest she killed Kurt.

Both Kurt and Courtney were famous heroin addicts. They emerged on the alternative music scene at a time when heroin was making a fashionable comeback to the prominence it enjoyed during the 70s. Courtney's drug use caused her both legal and PR troubles--although it is attractive to many of her fans. Legally, Courtney's drug use poses problems for her as a mother; at one point she temporarily lost custody of Francis Bean. The question of whether or not she was using drugs (and heroin in particular)

constantly buzzed about her pregnancy. No one seemed to care if Francis Bean's father used heroin. Courtney's drug use has been mythologized. Publicly, she obscures fan knowledge by insisting, vehemently at times, that she is not using heroin. These statements always come across as statements in the moment; she never denies that she has used heroin, but rather argues about when she used (not during her pregnancy, she claims). Courtney's fierce presence, however, feeds the myth of that she must be a drug addict--why else would she be so angry, so destructive?

Musically, Hole is the forerunning angry, radical, feminist band on the American music scene. Their lyrics, sung by Courtney, attest to and stage the trauma of being a girl/woman in this culture. Courtney constructs her public persona around this trauma. Describing her look as 'kinder-whore', she mixes babydoll dresses and hair styles with sex shop attire and make-up. Culturally, Courtney Love is frightening. I first really noticed her in the *Vanity Fair* article. I'd heard of her before, but I didn't really know her--or anything about her; I read the article because it was causing a big stink. Everyone talked about it. What struck me in this article? The fact that Courtney claimed that Madonna had stolen her look!

These notes represent my popular knowledge of Courtney Love. I have no idea what if anything is true--and frankly, as a fan, I don't care too much about that. I also researched her cover stories in *Spin*, *Rolling Stone*, and *Vanity Fair*. These interviews indicate several other points of interest: Courtney hates hippies and identifies new wave as one of her influences. Of interest for zin/ography are the points of identification that exist between us. Which aspects of Courtney's identity appeal to me?--feminine beauty, feminism, fandom and credibility. This is my image-repertoire.

Zin/ography, as a method for writing with identification, releases writers from the burden of having to forget everything they know (from Home, from Entertainment) to begin writing. Zin/ographers do not have to free themselves of their ideology; they are invited to begin with what academic writing traditionally asks them to forget. Zin/ography also does not require writers to master exterior systems of knowledge in order to begin. The zin/ographer can begin with what s/he already knows and proceed from there. To write with identification, the writer must let his/her identification lead the writing (instead of letting something--such as sociological or psychoanalytic theories--lead to an explication of identification).

When staging his image-repertoire, Barthes reveals that he "rarely starts from the idea in order to invent an image for it subsequently; he starts from a sensuous object, and then hopes to meet in his work with the possibility of finding an abstraction for it: he finds the gesture first (expression of the body), then the idea (expression of the culture, intertext)."[31] Writing with identification turns the normal process of academic writing inside out; it says to the writer: don't forget your ideological construction before you begin, begin writing with your habits, your body, your ideology.

Practice 2: Include discursive examples of your image-repertoire from the four domains of the pop cycle.

Barthes' pattern includes the types of texts he uses to make his text; as noted before, the figures are formulaic. By including different discourses in the fragments, Barthes facilitates the circulation of his image-repertoire through the pop cycle. The figures house these discourses: personal, popular, disciplinary, etc. Zin/ography invites composers to challenge their ideological constructions by writing their image-repertoire through the pop cycle. In addition, the zin/ographer need not worry about staging

contradictory images. Unlike academic writing's monolinear approach to thinking, the fanzine's approach tolerates contradiction and repetition because it has as its goal not an uncontestable Truth but rather a process of exploration. The zin/ographer focuses his/her attention on the creative process not an unchanging product. Like the fan writer who effaces the gap between the realm of his/her personal experience and that of the source text, the zin/ographer continually stages a process of discovery as s/he moves through the cycle. By staging his/her ideological constructions in the various discourse domains, the zin/ographer recognizes him/herself in a pleasurable way; we can laugh at ourselves as we see ourselves staged or set up.

"Laying My Cards on the Table" stages four of my stereotypes throughout the pop cycle. Where does feminine beauty occur in the domain of Schooling? In several places, but I choose one, bodily control, as the cite I stage because it corresponds with a personal memory. And what about fandom in the domain of Entertainment? It occurs in many places as well, but notably in *Play Misty for Me* where the mirroring of diegetic and extra-diegetic knowledge puts the stereotype in relief. (Clint Eastwood, who himself maintains quite a

fan following, plays a Carmel DJ who has an obsessed fan.) How do feminine beauty, feminism, fandom, and credibility occur in school, in Discipline studies, in Entertainment, and in Home or Family life (the realm of the personal)? The following tables outline the specifics or details I used to answer this question for my composition. Recall, they are only examples. I might use others, or I could compose a different zin/ographic experiment by staging other stereotypes.

<u>School</u>

1. An analogue to feminine beauty in schooling can be found in a lesson students learn early on: sitting still and being quiet. The key here is bodily control.

2. As a movement, feminism concerns itself with power relations, particularly those between men and women. Schooling too concerns itself with power relations, particularly the power dynamics of the classroom -- the relationship between student and teacher.

3. Schooling often extends beyond the three R's. Like fandom, schooling involves socializing and the building of communities.

4. Grades represent credibility.

Entertainment

1. In the entertainment domain, feminine beauty is hardly veiled. It occurs in various forms, though, such as the image, particularly the still, and instructions on how to look like the stars. I chose to work with the seminal how-to manual: *Color Me Beautiful*.

2. Feminism appears in female buddy films such as *Thelma and Louise* and *Beaches* as well as pop questionings of style (see Madonna). Riot Grrrl bands also represent feminism in entertainment. I work with the Riot Grrrl-esque band L7 and their Rock for Choice actions.

3. In this domain, fandom plays out in at least two key ways: fan magazines (produced by the industry) including the tabloids and the "fiction" of the obsessed psychopath.

4. Credibility in entertainment occurs as awards (such as Oscars, Emmys, and Grammies) as well as sales, and conducting interviews (on the circuit) artfully. In addition, Courtney Love addresses the question of credibility in her lyrics and interviews.

Discipline Studies

1. Cultural Studies' discourse on beauty: I cite Roland Barthes' mythology "Garbo" and Donna Haraway's "Cyborg Manifesto."

2. Feminist Theory, for instance, Laura Mulvey's work on spectral identification.

3. Hot theorists such as Walter Benjamin, Avitol Ronell, and Gilles Deleuze attract a kind of fan identification from academics.

4. Achieving credibility in the academy is a matter of aligning yourself with "great thinkers" (translation, 'academic hotshots') who provide argumentative proofs; I play around with this notion by imagining a Godardian analysis of *The Trouble with Harry*.

Personal

1. Clothing (among other things) creates both my mood and identity.

2. Second wave feminism's identification with the "natural" look has created a situation wherein I have to *justify* my own visual style.

3. My father's Elvis fandom colors my youth.

4. I am envious of Courtney's ability to shriek because I know that such behavior on my part would errode my credibility.

Practice 3: Write your fragments in various modes; use multiple genres to compose the text.

Zin/ography appropriates genre switching to the context of academic writing to open the discursive field of play. Rather than

using one genre to represent the whole of my composition, I use fragments of several genres. These mixed fragments flavor each other in various ways (much like mixed nuts), sometimes they compliment one another, sometimes they contradict (or slash). "Laying My Cards on the Table" includes the following modes or genres: narrative, interview, dialogue, citation, video script, film review, and image.

As noted above, fan writing which challenges the ideological construction of source texts is often marked by a slash [/]. This slash usually signifies that a fanzine challenges the gender constructions and assumed heterosexuality found in popular texts. I appropriate the slash for zin/ography to signify this genre's challenge not only to the uncritical presentation of stereotypes effected by popular culture, but also to the ideological assumptions of academic writing. Jenkins suggests that to become a writer of slash often involves the assumption of a secret activity. In School and Discipline Studies, attempting to write with a method other than critique or hermeneutics is often seen as a covert operation into a "forbidden zone."[32] Jenkins' interesting note about the *sound* of the

word slash suggests that there are provocative ways of working (here by ear) that differ from the traditions of academic writing.

Because I am not interested in simply staging identification, but rather staging identification to learn something about it, from the inside, I appropriate fan writing's slash for zin/ography to remind me that by staging identification I want to challenge not only my ideological construction, but also the ideological construction of the pop cycle. I take my cue in this move from Barthes. In *A Lover's Discourse* knowledge of the lover's gender eludes the reader. Barthes' elusive move reads as "a scandalous gesture" and thus reveals the highly charged and provocative nature of this circuitous challenge to the heterosexist assumptions of most of the culture's discourse on love. Barthes' gesture is scandalous because it subtly mounts this challenge from within rather than directly revealing/attacking the culture's ideological assumptions from the externalized grounds of hermeneutics and critique. The subtly scandalous gesture artfully seduces the reader into a continual questioning. The slash of zin/ography serves as an equally subtle reminder.

Zin/ography's genre-mixing pulls the composer away from what s/he might believe to be the central story at hand and casts him/her into the perceived fringes of his/her identity. (My point is that what we believe to be constituting our identity is often the screen on which it's projected). Fan writing focuses only on the fragments of popular texts which interest the fan. This fragmentation often refocuses the reader's attention on what were minor details in the source text. Similarly *A Lover's Discourse* tells the "asides" of the lover's story rather than the story itself. *A Lover's Discourse* and fan writing share a postmodern aesthetic as both genres fragment, recontextualize and refocus source texts in order to discover something new about them.

Practice 4: Foreground aesthetic logic; arrange the text according to a pattern.

I followed the leads of both *A Lover's Discourse* and fanzines when composing "Laying My Cards on the Table" by foregrounding pattern and backgrounding reason. For this composition, I chose the cliche as my key patterning tool. The stereotype maintains a doubled relationship to the project at hand; that is, I chose it for two

reasons: (1) where does the stereotype occur in language? in the cliche (2) what is the first rule you learn about the difference between everyday language and academic prose? don't use cliches.

In the paper version of zin/ography which follows, I organize the four discourse domains of the pop cycle by font. In addition, I organize the sequence of the fragments by cliche. In each fragment resides an embedded cliche which serves as the title for the following fragment. The series is circular in that the "final" fragment links back to the "first" fragment through an embedded and subsequently entitling cliche. The effect is that any fragment could be first, any fragment last.

Because of hypermedia technology, the electronic version of "Laying My Cards on the Table" pushes the aesthetic organization of the paper version even harder. Each of the discourse domains of the pop cycle are color coded (according to my personalized color palette). Cliches provide the hypertext links between screens. Some screens contain images which are linked by association, rather than explication, to on-screen cliches.

Practice 5: Remotivate textual meaning through juxtaposition. Ask yourself not so much what does it mean, but what does it mean in relation to something else? Focus on the meaning of the links between texts.

Comparing the operations of *A Lover's Discourse* with the characteristics of the problem established in chapter two: how to conduct electronic schooling, illustrates some common ground for reinventing the practices of Schooling. For instance, both *A Lover's Discourse* and electronic school shift focus away from linearity and hierarchy and toward multilinearity and networks; neither has a primary axis of organization. By alphabetizing the figures, Barthes establishes an arbitrary sequencing for *A Lover's Discourse.* The reader may proceed through the figures in whatever manner or order s/he pleases. They are not ordered so as to "build up" to a particular point which is made in a particular place. The "point" of *A Lover's Discourse* is that the point occurs throughout the network, not in a particular figure. As with computer memory, the knowledge of *A Lover's Discourse* is distributed throughout the system or between the figures. By recontextualizing a detailed fragment of a source text, the fan writer invites a host of associative readings of not only

his/her text, but also of the source text as well. Repeatedly fragmenting, recontextualizing and refocusing multiple source texts allows zin/ography to stage a constellation of associations. Zin/ography focuses on the connections between fragments.

Both the electronic and the paper versions hypertextually link the fragments via *cliches*. The *cliches* comment differently upon and sometimes slash the fragments to which they are linked. In the electronic version, each fragment is multiply linked so that its meaning might shift slightly with each *cliched* frame. Additionally, images occur on several screens. These images bear an associational relationship to one of the *cliches* embedded within the fragment. The multilinear nature of hypertext writing affords me more linking choices than the monolinear paper version. Each fragment of the paper version "physically" links to only one other fragment; this version relies on allusion for this effect rather than actual links.

Notes

1. Comely, Scholes, and Ulmer, *Textbook: An Introduction to Literary Language*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988) 205.

2. Roland Barthes, *Roland Barthes*, trans. Richard Howard, (New York: The Noonday Press, 1977) 21.

3. Roland Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*, trans. Richard Howard, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978) 3.

4. *A Lover's Discourse*, 1.

5. *A Lover's Discourse*, 1.

6. *A Lover's Discourse*, 59.

7. *A Lover's Discourse*, 60-61.

8. Henry Jenkins, "If I Could Speak With Your Sound': Textual Proximity, Liminal Identification, and the Music of the Science Fiction Fan Community," *Camera Obscura* 23 (May): 151.

9. Mike Gunderloy and Cari Goldberg Janice, *The World of Zines: A Guide to the Independent Magazine Revolution*, (New York: Penguin Books, 1992) 3.

10. Gunderloy, 1-2.

11. Judith Williamson. "Engaging Resistant Writers Through Zines in the Classroom," email to Rhetnet. Online posting. October, 1994. paragraph 7.

12. indie -- meaning independent.

13. Here I am thinking of the reader response studies of scholars like John Fiske and Henry Jenkins.

14. Henry Jenkins, *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture*, (New York: Routledge, Chapman, and Hall, Inc.,1992) 156-157.

15. *Textual Poachers*, 157.

16. "If I Could Speak With Your Sound'," 151.

17. *Textual Poachers*, 152.

18. "If I Could Speak With Your Sound," 154.

19. Cassandra Amesley, "How to Watch Star Trek," *Cultural Studies* 3.3 (1989): 323-39.

20. *Textual Poachers*, 159.

21. *Textual Poachers* , 159.

22. *Textual Poachers*, 168.

23. Henry Jenkins, "Star Trek:Rerun, Reread, Rewritten: Fan Writing as Textual Poaching," *Close Encounters: Film, Feminism, and Science Fiction* ed. Penley et al (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991)175.

24. *Textual Poachers*, 191.

25. Constance Penley, "Brownian Motion," *Technoculture* ed. Penley and Ross, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991) 139.

26. Penley, 137.

27. poaching -- Jenkins borrows this term from De Certeau who uses it to refer to popular readers' techniques of borrowing and transforming texts in order to make them more meaningful or relevant to the readers' everyday lives.

28. Kile, Crystal, *Girls Can Do Anything*, http://www.bgsu.edu/~ckile/GCDATWO.html

29. Kile.

30. Trinh T. Minh-ha, *Framer Framed*, 157.

31. *Roland Barthes*, 99.

32. *Textual Poachers*, 201.

CHAPTER 6

LAYING MY CARDS ON THE TABLE

At this point, I'd like to do two things. I'd like to consider how zin/ography might work in a classroom and I'd like to run the experiment myself. I hope that the two cases which follow (both the zin/ographic syllabus and the zin/ographic composition) might serve as examples of what zin/ography, as a method, allows us to do. They are by no means definitive, but rather suggestive of one way of writing with identification. While the five instructions are general, I've had to make personal, particular choices in order to carry them out. Note that this document contains a paper simulation of zin/ography; an electronic version is housed at

<http://ucet.ufl.edu/~mglaros/zin.ography/shrieks.html>.

Teaching Zin/ography

To teach zin/ography in a classroom, I initially present a brief introduction to the reasoning behind the method. That is, I want my students to generally understand why I am teaching them zin/ography rather than the kind of academic writing that even a brief tenure within the educational institution leads them to expect. I begin the first week of class with introductory material including a lecture on the justifications for both teaching and learning zin/ography as well as excerpted readings from Lester Faigley's *Fragments of Rationality*, Richard Ohmann's *English in America*, and Judith Williamson's "Engaging Resistant Writers Through Zines in the Classroom ." From that point I proceed through the exercises outlined below; they are designed to produce background material. This material is then used to complete the five step zin/ographic process. In an electronic classroom such as the University of Florida's Networked Writing Environment (NWE) I find it best to organize most in-class time into either discussions or workshops (as one might in a creative writing or a fine arts class). Obviously,

some time must be spent introducing the mechanics of the technology and lecturing on the reading material, but my classroom experience suggests that students are best off when given a brief introduction to the task at hand and then allowed to experiment on their own. During these times I see the most spontaneous collective learning take place -- a refreshing change for students whose previous schooling has taught them that learning is a solitary enterprise.

Introduction

As a form of writing, zin/ography asks you to explore your identifications. Taking the stereotype as a category of knowledge, this course asks you to write in such a way that you stage your image-repertoire. What, you might ask, is my image-repertoire? Your image-repertoire is a collection of scenes to which you respond "yes, yes, I know what that is (or what that is like)!" While your particular collection of scenes is specific to you, the scenes themselves are not. The scenes are general; they are shared by many people in our culture. Consider for a moment the stereotype of the lover and his/her scene of waiting:

The lover waits by the phone expecting a call. The lover keeps the phone in sight, but attempts to distract him/herself. S/he is (not) waiting for the beloved to call. The clock ticks audibly. The lover checks his/her watch and recrosses his/her legs. Perhaps the beloved is delayed; something may have come up. The minutes drag on. The lover begins to wonder: what if the phone is out? Is there trouble with the line? Should I lift the receiver to check? But the beloved may try to call while the phone is off the hook (however briefly -- the lover is thinking hysterically, not rationally, now). The phone rings; the lover snatches it up. Betrayal, it is not the beloved, but rather some nuisance tying up the line. The lover has been waiting hours now; s/he begins to fantasize: perhaps the beloved has been in an accident, is possibly dead . . .

The lover's scene of waiting is familiar to us because the stereotype of romantic love has currency in our culture. We see it repeatedly in books, films, and on TV; we experience it ourselves. It is an image to which we respond with recognition and identification. Each of our specific image-repertoires consists of such general images.

Zin/ography, as a way of writing, shows us how to stage this repertoire for ourselves so that we might better explore how our identifications are working in us.

Because it toys with our identifications, zin/ography has affinity with the electronic writing of entertainment culture more so than with traditional academic writing (which asks you to be objective). Zin/ography, however, as a writing practice might occur in many mediums (for example, hypertext, video, or paper)--both electronic and print; regardless, it's logic remains the same. Because zin/ography draws its material from you, from your life, the preliminary exercises listed below are designed to solicit this material from your experiences. Be sure to save all of your work as the class progresses; you will revisit all of it when producing your final project.

Exercise 1

Exercise 1 asks you to think about the stereotypes found in genre film. While we have discussed and analyzed several genres of film including the horror film, the love story, the action film, and the gangster film, this exercise asks you to focus on the Western. What

are the stereotypical characters and situations that generally appear in Westerns? What kinds of characters do you expect? What kinds of scenes? After screening several Westerns, you should be able to generate a list of stereotypical character types (the hero, the bad guy, etc.) as well as a list of common scenes (the saloon, the chase, etc.). From this list, each band of students (4-5) should get together and choose a scene to act out; each band member should choose a character type to play. These scenes will be performed in the MOO, so each band should get together to write up a set description (which you will enter as a room description) as well as character descriptions. You may also design props for your set. On the day of our performance, each band will enact its scene while the rest of us "lurk" (that is, we'll all be in your band room, but we won't be participating in your scene; we'll be silent). For this exercise it is extremely important to remember that the MOO allows you to communicate in two crucial ways: through "speech" and through gesture. In order for exercise 1 to be a success, you should concentrate *equally* on both of these modes of communication. That is, you should be gesturing as much as you speak.

<u>Readings</u>

excerpts from *Film Art* on genre films

Amy Bruckman's essay "Identity Workshop: Emergent Social and Psychological Phenomena in Text-Based Virtual Reality"

<u>Exercise 2</u>

For this exercise, you'll need to focus on a star. Who is your favorite star? Answer this question to begin. Don't labor over trying to think someone up; don't try to be original. To do so is to fight the assignment. What do you already know about this star? Start a journal in which you write down what you already know as well as what you learn about this star when researching the popular archive. Where have you seen this star? In movies, on TV, in magazines? What do you remember about what you've seen? In each instance, chronicle what you saw and why you liked it. Initially, you'll probably remember the positive things, but also try to remember and look at negative things about the star (or roles the star may have played) that remind you of yourself--either experiences you've had or ways you've felt. The point of this assignment is to get you to start thinking about how your fandom tells you something about who you are. To make sure the study is interesting, you should focus on

both the positive and negative ways you relate to your star. Try to think about and explain why certain aspects of a star's identity appeal to you. Ideally, this journal should be a record of both your identity and the star's; try to divide your attention equally between the two.

Readings

excerpts from *The Movie That Changed My Life*

Richard DeCordova's essay "The Emergence of the Star System in America"

excerpts from Richard Dyer's *The Star System*

excerpts from *Textual Poaching*

John Fiske's essay "Madonna"

Exercise 3

For this exercise you will need to review the collection of Cindy Sherman photographs on reserve in the library as well as the journal you wrote for exercise one. From this journal, I'd like you to choose at least 5 ways in which you identify with your favorite star--again, you should try to divide your attention between the negative and the positive. With her photographs, Sherman stages various cultural stereotypes that hail her. Think of the points of identification that exist between you and your star as cultural

stereotypes that hail you. Following Sherman's lead, or using her as a model, how might you stage these stereotypes in photographs of yourself? For exercise 3, stage 5 of these cultural stereotypes in photographs of yourself. Remember to pay very close attention to the details you include in your photographs--proper use of these details will make or break this assignment. Take several shots for each stereotype so that you may choose the best one (the one that most clearly stages that stereotype) to turn in. Pay close attention to lighting so that your photographs are clear and discernable. After you have chosen the 5 photographs that you want to turn in, write up a detailed analysis of each photo. This analysis should explain why you made various decisions when making the photograph: why these details, why this lighting, why this framing, etc.

Readings

Cindy Sherman's *Untitled Film Stills*

Judith Williamson's essay "A Piece of the Action"

review Fiske's essay "Madonna"

excerpts from Greil Marcus' *Dead Elvis*

Exercise 4

This exercise requires research outside of the lab/classroom. After reading the "Introduction" to *The World of Zines*, I'd like you to bring some local zines into class for study. If you are unsure of where to look for such things, try the local comic, independent record, and retro clothing stores. You can almost always find zines in these places. We'll look at these zines and webzines in class to get a general idea of what this kind of writing feels like. For exercise four, I'd like you to write your own zine for the World Wide Web. Using C. Kile's webzine *Girls Can Do Anything* as your model, use the five cultural stereotypes that you pinpointed in exercise four as food for thought. That is, I'd like your webzines to be working with these same five ideas or stereotypes. C. Kile stages some of the cultural stereotypes that hail her in her webzine. Let your analysis of *Girls Can Do Anything* direct your work with your stereotypes.

Where the aesthetic presentation of exercise four is concerned, you need to think carefully about two things: the look of each screen in your web (for this exercise you should produce *at least* 15 screens) and context, or the relationships between screens. Try to spend

quite a bit of time thinking about how your reader will proceed through your zine, what choices s/he will be given, what connections you will make. The goal here is to make the links between documents highlight the staging of the various stereotypes; the links between documents should communicate as much as the information within your documents.

<u>Readings</u>

The World of Zines, "Introduction"

excerpts from *Textual Poachers*

Judith Williamson's "Engaging Resistant Writers Through Zines in the Classroom"

C. Kile's *Girls Can Do Anything*

<u>Zin/ography</u>

The final and most ambitious project of this class is called zin/ography. As its name suggests, zin/ography is a kind of writing (ography) that appropriates some of the techniques of zine writing to an academic writing project. You'll notice the slash (/) in zin/ography; the slash serves as a reminder that through our writing we are trying to challenge the stereotypes that hail us. This challenge, however, is more sophisticated than a simple rejection or

condemnation of those stereotypes; instead, it signals a playful
exploration and transformation of those stereotypes. Zin/ography
involves a 5 step writing process that requires you to work with
the techniques you learned and the material you generated in
exercises 1-4.

*Step 1: Write your fascinations. Stage the image-repertoire of your
fandom.*

Return to the journal you generated for exercise 2. Rethink your
situation now that you've had most of the semester to reflect on
your relationship to your favorite star and list the points of
identification you have with that star. Working from this list, stage
these points of identification by writing them up; be sure to show
the points where you intersect with your star.

*Step 2: Include discursive examples of your image-repertoire from
the four domains of the pop cycle.*

Return to the list you generated in step 1. For step 2 you should
think about how these points of identification occur in various areas
of your life. They will appear in different forms. For each item on

your list, imagine how it exists in four areas of your life experience: your personal life (home/family), popular entertainment, school, and your major. Obviously, step 1 of this process has addressed the popular entertainment category, but are there other places in popular culture (besides your chosen star) where you identify in the same way; where you observe a similar stereotype hailing you? If so, include examples of these instances. Proceed by writing these kinds of instances up for the other 3 domains (home/family, school, and your major area of study); where in these domains of experience do you see your stereotypes at work?

Step 3: Write your fragments in various modes; use multiple genres to compose the text.

Return to the ideas you generated in steps 1 and 2. Experiment with mode, voice, and genre. Transform your fragments using various approaches. Try to avoid leaning too heavily on the traditional expository 'telling' mode of most academic essays--instead, try slashing some fragments. That is, use this playful space to indirectly challenge the stereotypes that hail you. Play with several

possibilities. Recall the lesson we learned about zine writing in exercise 4. Vary your fragments as zine writers vary theirs.

Readings

excerpts from Raymond Queneau's *Transformations*

Henry Jenkins' essay "'Welcome to Bisexuality, Captain Kirk': Slash and the Fan-Writing Community"

Constance Penley's essay "Brownian Motion: Women, Tactics, and Technology"

Screenings

Todd Haines' video, *Superstar: The Karen Carpenter Story*

Step 4: Foreground aesthetic logic; arrange the text according to a pattern.

At this point, you need to start thinking about the form your zin/ography will take. Proceed with a pattern in mind--then simply following the pattern. You might think about patterning your project in two ways: by screen and by link. That is, you want to consider both the aesthetics of the individual screen and that of the links between screens. Step 5, below, speaks directly to the issue of patterning you links, but for now you should think about the screens themselves. For our purposes, I might suggest that you

consider the aesthetics of zines as a guide. You might appropriate their aesthetic form and use it to present the work you are now doing. Remember that your pattern must repeat and be recognizable -- so strive for simplicity rather than too much complexity. If your reader cannot recognize your pattern, then it's failing to do its job. Sticking with one pattern will allow you to foreground aesthetic logic.

<u>Screenings</u>

Peter Greenaway's *H's*

Harun Farocki's *Images of the World and Inscriptions of War*

Step 5: Remotivate textual meaning through juxtaposition sequenced by the associational link. Ask yourself not so much what does it mean, but what does it mean in relation to something else? Focus on the meaning of the links between texts.

For step 5 I'd like you to experiment with the many ways you might connect your fragments. How does combining your fragments in different ways make them mean differently? Think about this aspect of your work very carefully. Which of your fragments are more telling when grouped together? Link these fragments together in ways which highlight these connections. Extrapolating from *On*

Dreams, use the four main operations of the dream work as your ways of linking. How might these translate to a written project? Use Michael Jarrett's piece *A Jarrett in this Text* as a model.

<u>Readings/Viewings</u>

Sigmund Freud, *On Dreams*

Michael Jarrett's, "A Jarrett in this Text"

Waxweb

<u>Screenings</u>

John Berger's *Ways of Seeing* (part 1)

<center>Composition</center>

To really test the viability of the zin/ographic method, I compose an example in the spaces that follow. A review of my decisions in response to the five general steps can be found in chapter four of this project.

Laying My Cards on the Table

Crocodile tears

When I was in the first grade, my best friend Julie and I
were the smartest kids in class. We were also the
squirmiest. Miss Hastings said we had ants in our skirts.
During class she used to reward us with candy if we answered
questions right or were able to perform certain first grade
type skills, such as reading a phrase or even a sentence.
Everyday, when our class returned from lunch we were supposed
to put our heads on our desks and remain quiet and still
until our teacher turned on the lights. If we were very
still and very quiet, we would get a piece of candy. And
although we tried, Julie and I usually could manage to remain
neither still nor quiet. We would talk and giggle the whole
time, thereby ruining any chances of winning candy. When we
were passed by during candy distribution, we'd cry crocodile
tears. By lunch time we'd usually stockpiled candy from the
morning's exercises and so it didn't really spoke our wheels.
We didn't mind losing ground.

Putting a spoke in their wheel

In January of this year Rock for Choice blazed a trail by organizing a concert in Los Angeles to raise funds for the Feminist Majority Foundation, once again filling the Hollywood Palladium. In addition to bringing together great music and lots of hip and aware youngsters, these benefits allow local and national advocacy groups to come out and disseminate further information about women's rights. They are also an excellent way for concerned kids to become involved by taking part in the fund-raising process or by becoming activists themselves. But organizing rock concerts can be a lot of work and the two women at Rock for Choice can't do it without a little effort on our parts. That is why others have, thankfully, taken it upon their own mettle to band together and throw R4C benefits at their colleges and within their own communities. These "satellite" concerts have been extremely successful at raising more than just funds, they also provide an excellent opportunity for young people to gain organizing skills. Contact R4C if your group would be interested in having a benefit in your home town. Just give them a call at 213.651.0495 and ask for the "do-your-own-show" package. It's fun and it works!

At the end of our tether

My diet pill is wearin' off
My diet pill is wearin' off

And I'm outa here
I'm so outa here
I'm outa here

Cuz ??? is in the bag
So many shades of red
red
The twins are in the car
car
The fryin' pan is red

Cuz ??? is in the bag
So many shades of

The twins are in the

The fryin' pan is red

Calgon can't take me away
swellin' is
No, Calgon can't take me away
From the things I did today

I think that the

goin down
I said I think that the
swellin' is goin' down
$200 to leave this

Cuz ??? is in the bag
town
So many shades of red
The twins are in the car

And I'm outa here
I'm so outa here
I'm outa here

DietpillxL7

Between the cup and the lip

The idea for this project was born one morning over coffee --

"Wouldn't it be a great idea if someone did a record with GIRL
BANDS of the 90s doing covers of GIRL SINGERS of the 70s?"
"Yeah, and it could be a benefit for PRO-CHOICE!"

That was in December of 91.

We would never have guessed that this would actually get made. Or that it would be US putting this record together. After all, we weren't famous, rich or well-connected, and we knew almost nothing about the music biz. But we picked up some how-to-manuals at the local bookstore and got to work. And the place went to pieces, I mean the pieces fell into place. Every major female artist, it seemed, wanted to be involved -- we were very excited.

We weren't alone. Pro-choice was one of the hot issues in the 1992 elections, and women everywhere were on fire to protect the constitutional right to reproductive freedoms. This fire eventually broke the ice; it got Bill Clinton in the White House and it got us meetings with the presidents of nearly every major label. Unfortunately, it was a lot easier to get a meeting than to get a record deal. Everyone, it seemed, was Pro-Choice, but everyone was really running with the hare and hunting with the hounds . . .

"You'll never find enough good female bands to fill up a whole record. And even if you do, nobody buys records by female artists."

"Look at all the heat Warner Brothers took for 'Cop Killer'. We can't go through that."

"The issue is just too hot right now. I don't want picketers in my parking lot for the next year."

"We won't touch this issue until after the election."

. . . And then, in early 1993 . . .

"Now that Clinton is elected, Pro-Choice isn't an issue anymore."

Newsweek, The Los Angeles Times Calendar Section, Fox News and scores of other publications did stories about the

project -- "Even superstars aren't enough to get a Pro-Choice record made!"

We were discouraged. By this time it was spring of 93, and we'd already invested a year's time and energy on this record. But clinics were being attacked by anti-abortionists, and it was increasingly apparent that this issue wasn't going away. Not yet, at least. We screwed our courage to the sticking point.

We talked to Rock for Choice about creating our own record label to release the album. We talked to independent distributors, small labels, and wealthy investors. And, as a last ditch effort, we mailed out information to every female R&R person at major labels. One of those women was Epic's Judy Ross. Thanks to her tenacity, nearly 14 months after our first meeting with her, the deal was signed.

Now, over 3 years from the original brainstorm, we're very proud that this compilation has been released. 550 Music, Epic Records, and Sony Music should be proud as well.

We believe that women's health and freedom of choice should not be a controversial idea. Each woman should be able to determine her own destiny, creatively and procreatively. This is her choice, not that of the government.

Rock for Choice, co-founded by L7, has combined the energy of DIY punk rock and the struggle for women's rights. "Spirit of 73: Rock for Choice" is a celebration of women's independence and creative spirit, as seen through a wide variety of musical styles -- hope you enjoy.

Thanks to all --
J & J

Running with the hare and hunting with the hounds

Courtney is neurotic about credibility, always striving for "Credit in the Straight World." It's a difficult thing for her, marrying a rock star, being interested in visual style, being a feminist in such a misogynist industry. Just the equation of a look + feminism is hard to pull off -- it's a matter of being between a rock and a hard hat.

I find it increasingly difficult to maintain a look and still be considered a thinking person. Apparently, when I was in my salad days, my performance of visual style was considered a trait of youth, rather than an exploration of the semiotics of "girliness." I say this because more recently, now that I'm approaching 30, I've been sung a swan song by someone quite close to me who I thought understood my performance; he has had a change of heart and can no longer dabble with such trivial things as style. No more fiddling while Rome burns. It's not that his plan is to be style-less, but rather he has decided that thinking about style is no longer a credible issue or one that deserves serious thought -- now that he's 32. Continuing my experiments with visual style thus makes me less credible.

This recent turn of events reminds me of my first decision to participate in a flamboyant style. In middle and high school, I realized that one's credibility in large part rested with one's ability to perform certain codes of visual style. For instance, the whole "dress for success" craze was based on this realization. In response to the vast sea of people I found myself surrounded by in my public high school (my previous schooling had been private and conducted on a much smaller scale), I cut my coat according to my cloth; I chose to dress as a punk for clarity and definition. Ironically, in high school, punk style signified (among other things) a certain credibility as the visual style was connected to a form of art (music) and a political movement (anarchy). I chose punk as my new style because I thought that it would quickly signal to people that I had some artistic and political credibility. In moving from my more insulated schooling experiences to a huge public high school, it didn't take long for me to realize that I thought and felt differently

than the other students about almost everything. I used punk style, and later new wave, to mark me as a person who deserves credit for thinking about what I considered to be the important but hard issues that most people dismiss.

SWAN SONG

***Deleuze is dead
***Re: Deleuze is dead
***Re: Deleuze is dead
***Re: Deleuze is dead
***Re: Deleuze is dead
***Re: Deleuze is dead
***Confirmation?
***Re: Deleuze is dead
***Re: Deleuze is dead
***Re: Confirmation?
***Re: Deleuze is dead [AP obit]
***reconfirmation
***Re: Deleuze is dead [Philosophie obit]
***Re: Deleuze is dead
***Re: Deleuze is dead
***salto mortale
***death
***Re: Deleuze is dead (fwd)
***Anything else to report?
****"line of flight" hoax?
***Re: salto mortale
***Re: death
***Deleuze's death
***Re: Deleuze is dead
***Re-re-confirmation
***Re [2]: salto mortale
***Re: Deleuze is dead
***Feelings
***Re: Feelings
***Liberation front page
***Re: Feelings
***Re: That old guy that died
***Re: Feelings
***List of D+G links on the web
***Re: deleuze-guattari-digest V1 #79
*** NYT on GD

***Re: Feelings
***Re: Feelings
***Becoming-children.
***Re: Deleuze is dead
***Oh, its just your stupid grieving
***After the fact
***A chagrin ses morts/To grief its deaths
***Re: Oh, its just your stupid grieving
***Comments on a Meeting with Gilles Deleuze (3/18/85)
***Re: Oh, its just your stupid grieving
***Re: Deleuze's death

From: <bnalexan@umich.edu>
Subject : Re: Deleuze is dead

What?!?!

* *

On Sun, 5 Nov 1995, Melissa McMahon wrote:
I don't know what to say. I feel
the same   way you guys do. If
you guys don't   think ... to sit in
this room where he
>Tonight it was announced on French radio   played guitar and
sang, and
that Deleuze has committed suicide   feel so honored to be
near him,
(one >report said that he 's'est   you're crazy.
defenestre' ie. threw himself out of   ... Anyway, he left a note;
it's more like a window).   letter to the fucking
editor. I don't know   what happened. I mean it
was gonna happen,   but it could've
happened
From <s_cad1@eduserv.its.unime1b.edu.au>   when he was 40.
He always
Subject: Re: Deleuze is dead said he was gonna outlive everybody and
be a

hundred and twenty. I'm not gonna read you the note

On Sun, 5 Nov 1995, Melissa McMahon wrote: 'cause it's none of the rest of your fucking business. But some of

>Tonight it was announced on French radio that it is to you. I don't think

Deleuze has committed suicide (one >report it takes away his dignity

said hat he 's'est defenestre' ie. threw this considering that it's addressed to

himself out of a window). most of you. He's such an asshole.

I want you all to say 'asshole' really loud.

Is this true? Can someone confirm???

From: <tbyfield@panix.com>

Subject: "line of flight" hoax?

*This note should be pretty easy to understand. All

The following item has been circulating the warnings from the punk

as having been posted to this list: rock 101 courses over the years since my first

introduction to the shall we say

ethics involved with

>Tonight it was announced on independence of your

embracement community,

French radio that Deleuze it's proven very true. I haven't felt the excitement

has committed suicide (one report said that he of listening to as well as

creating

's'est defenestre' ie. threw himself music, along with

really writing some-

out of a window). thing, for too many years

now. I feel guilty

```
                    beyond words about these things -- for
example,                                    when
But no obit appeared in the Sunday or,      we're backstage and the
lights                                                       go
out
I am told, Monday NYT, and a search for "Deleuze"   and the roar of
the                                         crowd
on the Lyon Capitale web page turns         begins it doesn't affect me
the                                         way in which it did for
up "D=E9so1=E9, aucun document    Freddie Mercury, who seemed to
correspondant =E0 'Deleuze'l"               love
adoration of                                the crowd."
Would folks kindly let me know what's up

Thanks kindly,              Well, Kurt, so fucking what -- then
don't be a
Ted                                         rock star you asshole.

From: <CSTIVAL@cms.cc.wayne.edu>      "Which is something I
totally                                     admire
Subject: Re: Deleuze is dead         and envy.  The fact that I can't
fool                                        you, any
                                            one of you, it simply isn't fair to
you or                                      to me.
When I heard of Michael Current's death The worst crime I could
                                            think
several years ago, I had a very similar,  would be to pull people off
by                                          faking it,
overpowering feeling of loss,               pretending as if I'm having
%100 fun.
although I'd never "met" Michael
face to face, rather the intensity of     Well, Kurt, the worst crime I
his words.  Reading Melissa's message,    think
I can                                       of is for you to just
I found myself ...  laughing...  this is the
continue being a
```

way he wanted to go. A short while later, I found the words in _Pourparlers_, that began reverberating when I read Melissa's post: "That's what subjectification is about: bringing out on a curve into the line, making it curve to back on itself, and making force impinge on itself. So we get ways of living with what I would otherwise be unendurable. What Foucault says is that we can only avoid death and madness if we make existing into a 'way', an 'art'. It's idiotic to say they're Foucault discovers or reintroduces slightly a hidden subject after having once had rejected it. There's no subject, but a production of subjectivity: people subjectivity has to be produced, when it's time arrives, precisely to gather because there is no subject. There's The time comes once we've too

rock star when you fucking just fucking stop.

"Sometimes I feel as I should have a punch-in-time-clock before I walk out on stage. I've tried everything within my power to aapriciate it, and I do, god believe me I do, but it's not enough. I appreciate the fact that I and we have effected and entertained a lot of must be one of those narcissists only appreciates things when alone. I'm too sensitive. I need to be numb in order to regain the enthusiasm I as a child. On our last three tours I've much better appreciation of all the I know personally, and as fans of our music, but I still can't get out the frustration the empathy I have for everybody. good in all of us and I simply love people much."

worked through knowledge and power;
  it's that work that forces us to frame
the new question, it couldn't have been
framed before. Subjectivity is in no sense
a knowledge formation or power function that
Foucault hadn't previously recognized;
subjectification is an artistic activity distinct
from, and lying outside, knowledge and power.
In this respect Foucault's a Nietzschean,
discovering an artistic will out on the
  final line.   Subjectification, that's to say,
the process of folding the line outside,
mustn't be seen as just a way of protecting
oneself, taking shelter.   It's rather the only
way of confronting the line, riding it: you
may be heading for death, suicide, but as
Foucault says in a strange conversation So why didn't you just
fucking   stay?
with Schroeter, suicide then becomes an   All you need to do is just
keep   your
art it takes a lifetime to learn."   fucking ass
above water!
CJ Stivale

                              "So much so that it makes me feel
just   too
From: <WTR100F@oduvm.cc.odu.edu>   fucking sad. Sad little
                                        sensitive
Subject: Re: deleuze-guattari-digest v1 #79   unappreciated
little
                                        pieces ..."

While I am aware that Gilles Deleuze's
decision to embrace the Long Night may Jesus man oh shut up ...
                                        bastard. Why
have been prompted by physical illness, it   didn't you just
enjoy it? I   sensitive
also struck me as ironic [is that the right word?]   don't
goes on   know. Then he
                                        to say

that in the last year, year and a half,
that are
two of France's great gifts to the post-May '68
business;
events left have taken the Final Exit of their
own accords -- first, Guy Debord of situationist
fame, and , now, Gilles Deleuze. Do you
think these two events taken together
are telling of our times at the fin-de-millennium?
One is reminded of the Chinese curse:
"May you live in interesting times."

personal things to me
none
of your damn
personal
things to Frances that
none
of your damn
business.

"I had a good marriage, and for
that I'm
grateful. But since
the age of
seven,
I've become hateful toward all
humans in
general only because it seems so easy
people to get along that have empathy."

From: <gseigwor@marauder.millersv.edu>
the age of
Subject: Re: Feelings

for
Feelings was a really good song by Morris Albert.
Me? I've got another tune running through
my head. I keep thinking of my favorite
song of the past year: Bjork's "Hyper-Ballad."
Walking to the cliff every morning, throwing
off little things like car parts, bottles, and
cutlery, realizing that she'd acquired a habit
(and as Deleuze often said we are nothing
more than habits, the habit of saying "I"),
and one morning Bjork, as she watches   Empathy?
the objects descend and smash, notices
something she hadn't before. The objects
call back to her, provoke and stir a curious
desire. What if she followed? "Imagine,"
she sings, "what my body would sound
like/slamming against those rocks/and
when it lands/will my eyes/be closed or open?"

Deleuze always seemed to be following the flight
of objects and the trajectory of curious (and not-so-curious)
desires. Like Spinoza, he wanted to discover
what a body can do: its affects and sonorities.
I can't help but think that his death was a
final "relay," as Deleuze and Foucault spoke
together, in that instantaneous switch of
theory into practice. And I'm betting his
eyes were open ... the whole way.

                      "Only because I love and feel for people
                                                too

From: <aden@user1.channell.com>   much I guess. Thank you all
from pit   of my
Subject: Feelings   burning nauseous stomach for your
                  letters and concern during the last years.
I am having trouble feeling sad, happy,   I'm pretty much of an
or anything but indifferent. Most of what   erratic moody person and
I don't   the passion anymore.
is great about Deleuze is still here, and I   have
Peace,   Love,
didn't expect a lot more work from him, anyway. Empathy,
Kurt   Cobain."
Perhaps in the wake of his death, some memoirs
will be published, or his popularity will surge, with
consequences fortunate and unfortunate.
Maybe he was a nice man, certainly his   And there's some more
                                 personal
politics were interesting, but still I cannot things that is none of
your damn
be bothered to do much mourning. (Not that business. And just
                               remember:
anyone is asking me to do so, but I feel somehow this is all
bullshit .... And
as though I ought to be sad, what with death I'm laying in our bed,
and   I'm
being so sad as everyone thinks. My wife is sad, really sorry you
guys. I   don't

though she has never read any Deleuze, and   know what I could have

has no idea what he is about.)   done. I wish I'd been here. I wish I

                         hadn't listened to other people, but I did.

On with it then,
Aden

"Some are born posthumously."
--Nietzsche

From: <CSTIVAL@cms.cc.wayne.edu>
Subject: Re: Feelings

                         Every night I've been sleeping with his
Aye, Aden ... we all deal with it the best   mother, and I wake up in the
                                                morning
we can... as we have been doing all along   and think it's him because his
                                                body is
in our intersections, online and with D&G's works.
sort of the same.
Everything I write feels reduced to some sort of
banality. I share your indifference, to some
extent, but I have certain recollection too,
of meeting him and sharing an *apero* in   I have to go now.
his old apartment, and that encounter,
as well as myriad encounters with D&G-ians,
many on this list, occasioned by our mutual interest(s),
are what buoy me and make me hopeful.
CJ Stivale   -- Courtney Love

Dear gilles,

you fucker. jumping out of a window no less. I suppose this is what you mean by a line of flight? but i'm not going to hold you to some sartrian bullshit good-faith/bad-faith spread sheet calculus -- you, you, who were you? you wrote one of my 3 favorite books of all time, _difference and repetition_ (the other two: _the tempest_ and (in a tie) _le chants de maldoror_ and _being and time_ [to be read in

tandem]). among its many opalescent phrases, summaries, abstractions, and historical recapitulations, this book contains the most exquisite paraphrase of Heidegger's "the fact that we do not yet think," that is, the fact of historical finitude, what Heidegger, (and I too) take to be the task of thinking, that i have ever read: "What is stupidity?" and stupidity, you said, is "neither the ground nor the individual, but rather this relation in which individuation brings the ground to the surface without being able to give it form (this ground rises by means of the I, penetrating deeply into the possibility of thought and constituting the unrecognized in every recognition)." so when you jumped out of the window, and the ground was rising to meet the i to constitute a new surface, a new plane, a plateau of intensities and a fabulous consistency, was this stupidity? or rather, what stupidity is this?

dearest love and admiration,
christian gregory

Keeping your head above water

(excerpted from the University of Florida's Undergraduate Catalogue, "Grades and Grading Policy" ...)

Grade Point Averaging and Deficits

The term "average," as used in any university regulation, refers to the grade point average for work completed at the University of Florida. Grades received at other institutions are NOT averaged with grades received at the University of Florida for the purpose of meeting university average requirements. Other agencies and honorary societies will compute averages in accordance with their own standards and policies.

Averages are determined by computing the ratio of grade points to semester hours attempted . For the grade point average computation formula, please refer to the example below. A grade point deficit is defined as the number of grade points below a C average on hours attempted at the University of Florida. If the grade point average is less than 2.0, there is a grade point deficit.

Only grades higher than C will lower a deficit. Every credit of C+ earned removes .5 from a deficit (a C+ in a three credit course removes 1.5 deficit points); every credit of B removes 1 deficit point; and every credit of A removes 2 deficit points.

Computation of a grade point deficit is dependent upon first calculating the grade point average. Multiply the total UF hours carried for a grade by 2 (for 2.0 GPA) and subtract the total grade points earned to determine the deficit. For instance, if a student has taken 100 hours for a grade, then 200 grade points are needed for a 2.0 GPA. If there are 196 grade points, there is a 4 point deficit.

Calculating Your Grade Point Average *(facing the music)*

Multiply grade value times the number of credit hours for total grade points. Then divide the total number of grade points by the number of hours

attempted. (Exclude hours attempted under the S/U
option.) The resulting number shows your true colors.

Calculating Your GPA and Deficit Points

A=4.0   C=2.0   WF=0.0points
B+=3.4   D+=1.5   I=0.0points
B=3.0   D=1.0   NG=0.0points
C+=2.5   E=0.0   S or U=0.0points

Sample:

Course	Grade	Grade Value		Credit Hrs.		Grade Points
AML 2020	D	1.0	x	3	=	3.0
PSY 2013	S	NA	x	NA	=	NA
SPN 1110	C	2.0	x	5	=	10.00
PSC 1420	D	1.0	x	3	=	3.0
				11		16.0

16.0 divided by 11 = 1.45 grade point average

Since the GPA is less than 2.0, to figure the
grade point deficit:

11 total credit hours x 2.0 = 22 grade points necessary for
2.0 GPA
22-16 (total grade points earned) = 6 deficit points

Press Release-- Stay true to your colors

In early 1980, Carole Jackson started taking America by storm with her breakthrough book *Color Me Beautiful*. The book sold like hotcakes -- and it was no flash in the pan! Today, women everywhere still shop and dress according to the color patterns outlined in Jackson's book.

How does she do it? Jackson lets the cat out of the bag by providing women with a failsafe method for determining which colors look great on which people -- and which should be avoided (got to give the devil his due). Jackson's beauty method is simple: analyze your hair and skin tones to decide which season you are and then apply that knowledge to both your make-up and fashion selections.

Each season (Fall, Winter, Spring, and Summer) represents a 30 shade palette that brings the wearer of those colors to life. For instance, a winter can wear clear, true primary colors and icy colors, while summers are flattered by softer shades. Autumn's come to life in rich warm tones and Spring beauties are enhanced by clear warm colors. The key, notes Jackson, is shading; everyone can wear some shade of blue, but not everyone can wear navy (for an Autumn like me, wearing navy is a fate worse than death). You must recognize which shades of blue look best on you in order not to foul your own nest.

Jackson's book is written in a clear and simple style. It is set up so that you can conduct your own color test (she outlines a three step method). The book includes removable color swatches that women can take with them as they shop, thus insuring that they buy clothing and make-up that enhances their natural coloring. The book concludes with in-depth discussions of how to put it all together: Jackson offers advice on finding the right make-up for your face and getting the right hair color as well as establishing a wardrobe that works and accessorizing it properly. In addition, she provides tips on organizing your closet and shopping sanely.

All in all, Carole Jackson's book, *Color Me Beautiful*, is a quick and easy guide for determining which colors should be patterning your life.

Recognizable Gestures
(or, Giving the Devil his Due)

<u>Video</u>	<u>Audio</u>
Title: Black on white: Recognizable Gestures	Low squeak of moving baggage belt
Fade up from white to shot of moving baggage belt at airport	
Cut to shot of sign reading Baggage Claim	
Cut to title: Everyday Life "American"	Fade up Elvis' Trilogy"
Cut to shot of me sitting on floor ("Dixieland") unpacking suitcase	
Shot of me taking out a delicate cup and saucer, an afghan, Of Grammatology, and Dead Elvis. I thumb through Dead Elvis.	
Cut to shot of me beside TV. I freeze the moving video footage (Elvis performing "American Trilogy" in Las Vegas). The tape freezes on "the claw." I speak to the camera.	"This is a gesture I recognize as my father's."
Cut to shot of large shopping bag being carried in a mall.	ambient mall sound

Cut to shot of man wearing overcoat
and hat. He has a cart loaded with
"junk" including the shopping bag
from the previous mall shot.

ambient street
sounds

Cut to title: The Academy

Cut to shot of me climbing stairs with
suitcase. Shot from above as I ascend.

sound of
footsteps as I
climb

The camera focuses on the suitcase.
My face is not visible in the shot.

Cut back to shot of man now trying
to push cart over curb and having to
adjust bag.

ambient street
sound

Cut to shot of me putting suitcase
down, opening it, and unpacking.

"American
Trilogy"

Cut to overhead shot of me unpacking.
I thumb through books and look at
objects as I pull them out.

Cut to shot of me by TV; I address
the camera.

"A few weeks
ago I rushed
through a
presentation for
fear of being
rude to a
professor."

("American
Trilogy" cont.)

Cut to me unpacking suitcase.
Time lapse effect using stills and
fades.

Cut to shots of garbage bags on
street that say (blk on wht)
"PORNOGRAPHY DESTROYS"

ambient street
sounds (AT
cont.)

Cut to shot of me and my sister
lounging on a bed.
She says:

"So I asked him
why are you two
the same, and he
said, 'Didn't
you know? I
taught Elvis
everything he
knows'." (AT
cont.)

Cut back to shot of Baggage
Claims sign.

Cut to bag man pushing cart
down sidewalk.

ambient sound

Cut to shin in mall. Camera
follows the large shopping bag as
a woman carries it. She weaves
in and out of the racks of clothing.

ambient sound

(cut AT)

Cut to shot of me by TV. I
address the camera

:

"Wolves in
sheep's clothing,
advertising
continually
proposes
solutions to
problems I don't
have. I
continuously

worry about
developing the
problems that I
knew nothing
about before
seeing the
advertisement."

"American
Trilogy" until
end of video

Cut to shot of me unpacking the
suitcase. I take out a magazine,
close the case, and set it upright.
I walk around in front of the case
(toward camera) and sit on case
to read the magazine.

Cut to close up shot of back page
of magazine. The Liz Claiborne ad
reads: "We all carry baggage, the only
question is how."

Cut to wider shot. I close magazine
and place it on the stack of other
items I've unpacked from the
case. The title, *Glamour*, is
visible. I get up.

Cut to shot of B&W footage of Elvis
in the army. He carries a duffel
bag on his shoulder.

Title: wht on blk: STYLE

(drum roll in AT)

Cut to B&W shots of young Elvis
dancing.

Title: It's just a part of growing up.

Shot of ecstatic face moving in slow
motion, has bluish tint.

Shots of Elvis, Priscilla, and Lisa Marie
as a toddler.

Title: Fanatic Attraction over crowd

shot, cheering hands raised over head.

Title: I'm your biggest fan over shot
of fan faces tinged with green and in

slow motion.

Fade to green.

Title: Special Thanks:
Melissa Glaros
David Govoni
Richard Howard
Claudia Valbuena

"This is a
gesture that I
recognize as my
father's."

Crowd cheers
at end of AT.

A Wolf in Cheap Clothing

Man: Geez this film is slow.

Woman: Hey, what do you think you're looking at?

Man: Me? Nothing. Well, I'm trying to watch this film, but you're distracting, you're slowing things down. Pick up the pace!

Woman: Hey, buddy, I'm doing the best that I can. I've got you guys out there to contend with, not to mention the clowns up here. I tell you, if it weren't for me, nothing would be happening at all. Trust me on this one, it's true what they say: behind every good plot there's a woman.

Man: No way, lady. You've got it all wrong. That guy up there with you, he's pretty cool -- and he's the only one doing anything as far as I can see. He's doing all the moving and shaking. As far as I can tell, you're just standing around making eyes.

Woman: Typical!

Man: What? I'm just saying that I'd like to have what he's got!

Woman: You know, this job ain't easy. This dress they gave me is too sizes too small. I feel like I'm liable to bust out of it any minute. If you think thing's are moving slowly now, just think what a disaster it would be if I fell out of this stupid dress!

Man: I don't want any trouble with you, lady, and I sure didn't mean to disturb you. It's just that this film seems to be dragging a bit, and it's making me feel a little anxious. I can't quite put my finger on it, but it feels like something might be missing.

Woman: Oh, right, and I guess you're going to blame that on me too. I'm at fault for slowing the film down and now I'm also guilty of making you feel a bit uncomfortable. What am I -- a straw woman? Sitting out there watching us run around is not uncomfortable! Wearing these heels, now that's uncomfortable!

Man: Settle down! I don't blame you, not really, or not in any way that really matters. I really like you. I have a picture of you in my locker at work. Seeing your smile every morning and evening makes even the roughest day tolerable.

Woman: Well I'm just so happy that I can make your life a little easier. Please let me know if there's anything else I can do.

Man: Do? Naw, you don't have to do anything but sit there and look pretty. That's all I want from you.

Chewing the Cud with Clinton
(or, Laughing up my sleeve at the strawman)

Michelle: President Clinton, last week you signed a recommendation that schools consider requiring students to wear uniforms. What prompted you to do this?

Clinton: Well, Michelle, I'll tell you. I feel that as Americans it is our responsibility to do something about the escalating violence in this nation's schools. Right now, some students are afraid to go to school for fear of being attacked for their jackets or sneakers. This sort of thing has got to end; we've got to throw down our gloves!

Michelle: And you believe that school uniforms will put a stop to the violence we see in our schools?

Clinton: Certainly, not only will school uniforms remove the reasons for such attacks, they will also cut down on the associated gang activity we see taking place in our schools. Gangs, as you probably know, use "colors" to identify themselves to each other. Without those colors the gangs will not be able to communicate in schools -- and thus will leave them. School uniforms will really cook their goose!

We have a real problem now with the way students think of school; that is, they often say it feels like a prison, and I'll tell you why. According to K. Boyle's research on gangs in schools, gang members often see school as a form of incarceration; the gangs are responsible for spreading this negative idea of school to our students. School uniforms provide a means of reversing this situation. As I said before, when everyone looks the same, gangs will leave schools and our children will stop thinking of school as prison. Uniforms make all students birds of one feather. Right now, with all the violence in the schools, it's no wonder the students think they're in jail; the schools are just about as dangerous as our jails. It's the violence in

schools that makes students consider them prisons: get rid of the violence and you get rid of the idea of school as prison.

Michelle: Hmmm, that's an interesting line of thought. You might be confusing chalk and cheese, however. Leaving that aside for the moment though, I'm interested to know what kind of uniform you imagine schools using.

Clinton: People in my administration have studied various school uniform codes around the country and have come up with the following recommendations:

1. Students should dress in a way that is proper which means that the clothing should be appropriate for one's sex and for the occasion it is worn.

2. Students should dress in a way that is modest which means that their clothing should effectively cover their nakedness.

3. Students should dress in a discreet manner that is tasteful and unoffensive to family values.

Michelle: Research on gangs in schools suggests that the primary reason that gangs take root in schools is their ability to respond to student needs that are not otherwise being met; that is, they often provide youth with a sense of family and acceptance that are lacking in their lives. What do you envision the kinds of uniforms you describe doing for the country's school systems?

Clinton: Student uniforms promote school identity in neighborhoods and a sense of community within a school. We hope that by offering students a visual way of identifying with their school and schoolmates that they will find gang membership less attractive. In a sense, the school might become their gang. In addition, uniforms promote self-discipline and responsibility by focusing student's attention on the learning process rather than other's clothing.

Finally, school uniforms should relieve parents of the financial burden of having to buy fashionable school clothes which are often quite expensive. Once again, by removing those expensive clothes from the schools, we hope to end the violence they often incite.

Look, gangs form because youth feel alienated and powerless because of a lack of traditional support structures such as family and school; these feelings give way to frustration and anger and a desire to obtain support. Gangs now offer this support. Also, gangs offer youth a sense of belonging and a source of identity. What I am recommending to schools is that they use school uniforms to provide all of these things to the students. School uniforms offer a sense of community and a chance to identify with one's school; they can provide a sense of pride and support to our nation's students and thus put a stop to these feelings of anger and powerlessness. That's why I cannot recommend strongly enough that people urge their local school boards to adopt the school uniform policy that my administration has provided.

Michelle: Well, this chat has surely been interesting and somewhat enlightening; unfortunately, we are out of time. Thank you very much President Clinton for stopping by and sharing your thoughts on school uniforms with us. We really appreciate it. Please join us again next week for *Chewing the Cud With Clinton* when our topic will be the Mad Cow Disease.

Throwing down the glove

Courtney faces the music with the closing track on *Live Through This*:

Well I went to school in Olympia
Where everyone's the same.
And so are you, in Olympia
Everyone's the same
We talk the same, we look the same,
We even fuck the same
Well, I went to school in Olympia

MAKE ME REAL
WON'T YOU PLEASE
FUCK YOU
WON'T YOU MAKE
ME REAL
WON'T YOU PLERSE

Well, I went to school ...

One's relationship to one's look is very complicated and not easily (or wisely, I might add) dismissed. "Sometimes I want to just wear regular clothes onstage. Then I wonder, if by not being so extreme, can I still pull it off? I need my costume, my *thing*." Manners, remember, maketh the man.

It's a vexed question, whether or not you can still be you without your clothes. Most people would say that your clothes have nothing to do with who you are, but just ask them to go through one of their days without their clothes (or say with no clothes) and I doubt they'd behave as their usual sleeve-laughing-selves; they'd be out of the frying pan and into the mire! The question of who we are is complex. While most people would say that they are not their clothes, would they say that they are their behavior? Is your behavior who you are? When friends behave in unfamiliar ways, we say that they are

showing a clean pair of heels or not themselves, thus implying that behavior comprises who you are. Clothing affects behavior. If I wear jeans and a sweat shirt or a cocktail dress or bondage gear, I behave differently -- and people behave differently towards me. While dress is not the only factor that affects behavior (for instance, illness and fatigue do as well) who I am, how I behave, to a certain extent depends on what I'm wearing. I learned this lesson in school. If I wore plain clothes, if I dressed like most people, then I was a wall flower. If I wore outrageous clothes (or even just bad-ass clothes) then I was a person people knew.

Showing a clean pair of heels

Glamour: One thing that people always note about you is your sense of style. Were you always stylish, even as a kid, or do you remember a time when you first developed it?

Michelle: Always stylish? Certainly not. As a child, I think I was properly dressed. Those were halcyon days for my mother! That is, I see old photographs and I seem to be wearing cute clothes -- which is normal for the fair sex. The only thing I remember about my sense of fashion is that I never wanted to wear dresses -- that was a problem for my mother (I think the compromise was that I'd wear them to church, but that was it). My hair, a woman's glory, you know, now *that* was another issue. Things were fine until about first grade. My mom made me get my hair cut into a pixie. I hated it! I wanted to keep my hair long, but I guess my mom wanted it short. My hair really is too thin to be worn long (according to industry standards) so I suspect that realization tempted my mom into having it cut. The whole experience was terribly traumatic (to the point that I remember the day very well). After that fiasco, my parents just left my sister's hair long and stringy (a look they couldn't bear because it reminded them of hippies). From that point on I basically hated my hair until near the end of high school.

Glamour: What changed with high school?

I basically had no style until the end of high school; I was just your garden variety girl. In junior high, I started thinking about style, but I didn't manage to do anything about it for several years. In high school I think I finally got tired of being completely lost in the crowd. There were 3,000 kids in my school (needless to say there was no room for swinging cats) and no one knew what was going on. The school was so large that there wasn't even a socially dominant group of students; there were several cliques formed around different interests. Despite this supposed "pluralism" it was still very easy to be a nobody. Since I took classes with the smart kids, I was in a smaller group. In this group, however, smart was not a distinguishing feature (hell, everyone was smart); you needed

another gimmick. Some chose good, some chose funny (always a clown, no matter the group), and I chose "artistic" -- at least that's how I thought of it. I'm not sure that I know what artistic meant to me at that time although it was tied up with a vague attempt at critical thinking. It's visual translation, however, was punk. I guess I thought that punk was a visual manifestation of a certain kind of knowledge, a recognition of oppression. It makes a certain kind of sense as punk proved liberating for me.

Glamour: How was punk liberating for you?

Michelle: Above all else, my move into punk demonstrated to me that being visually "attractive" was a function of style rather than "natural beauty." That is, looking good is not something you have to be born with, it is not something that transcends, rather it is constructed. Sleight of style. The trick is to learn how to construct your looks. Now, there are all kinds of attractiveness. There's the glam sort of movie star attractiveness. There's a 'smart' kind of attractiveness and then there's always cute. This is just a short list; the actual possibilities are in a way endless because there are always new variations and hybrids on the old themes.

Punk was liberating for me because it introduced me to this lesson. As I grew older, my hair changed from a decent shade of blonde into a really mousy color. When I was punk, I answered with a pink dye and while the pink phase didn't last long, my hair hasn't been it's "natural color" (whatever that is) ever since. Pink just made me think of the possibilities of blonde, black, and red.

My clothing styles have followed a similar trajectory. While I was exclusively punk for awhile, I spent a much longer period as new wave. New wave interested me because it really opened my eyes to the possibilities fashion poses. New wave, as a style, incorporated various looks, including punk and period fashions. New wave even went so far as to include the fashions of the Restoration and Victorian eras. I recall shopping in vintage stores for really old clothing. Fashion plays a really key role in making someone "beautiful" or "attractive" -- and I think that's legitimate because

all it says is that you have the wherewithal to think about how to construct yourself -- and it also says that you have an eye, a sense of your visual surroundings. I don't think there's anything wrong with being aware of these things, and I certainly don't think that being aware of these things precludes you from being aware of other issues. In fact, it might expand people's ability to think about their participation in their culture.

Glamour: You're certainly not punk now, or even new wave, so what became of that style?

Michelle: Two things: First of all, when I was in college, I tried being a hippie for a while. I was very interested in environmentalism and the peace movement and as I worked on various political actions, I inevitably ended up surrounded by hippies. Quite a change of scene for me as there wasn't a punk or new waver in sight. In this context, my costuming became more and more hippie-esque. Eventually, I ran into a problem. My love of sarcasm got the best of me (or, I should say, the hippie-ness of me). What eventually split us up -- me and the hippies -- was my anger; while the hippies were very committed to and impassioned about their political causes, their peace-love-joy approach to conflict just didn't sit right. I was still a punk at heart; I was angry and I felt physically violent. I stopped being a hippie because I could see that it was fucking with my anger, and my anger was something that I'd really come to embrace. I decided that, although possibly appealing in the best of all possible worlds, giving over to the peace-love-joy idea was politically dangerous red herring in this one.

The Fair Sex

<u>video</u>	<u>sound</u>
opening shot: wide shot of two computers, their screens glowing in a darkened room.	silence

The shot tightens in on the screens, we
see that text is appearing on the screens, the shot is not tight enough to focus on the text. How the text reads is still unclear. As the text scrolls on the left computer, the right computer is "mute," that is, no text scrolls on its screen. After 30 seconds, the text on the left computer stops scrolling. The still shot is held 4 seconds.

Track one: standard keyboard clacking while text is scrolling; silence when no text scrolls (repeat pattern until the end of tape).

The shot pans slightly to the right, still keeping the left computer in the frame, but drawing the viewer's attention to the computer to the right. Text begins scrolling on the right computer. Text scrolls 5 seconds and then stops. The shot holds for 3 seconds then pans back slightly to the right (again, keeping both computers in the frame at all times). Text scrolls once again on the left monitor.

The shot cuts to a tight shot of the left monitor; the scrolling text is now visible.

Track two: fade up "Doll Parts" -- repeat until end of tape. I am doll eyes,"the doll mouth, doll legs

This text reads as follows: RB says face ... of Garbo still partakes of the same rule of Courtly Love, where the

flesh gives rise to mystical feelings of perdition."

The shot cuts to a tight shot of what

has been established as the answering computer. The text reads as follows: DH says "A cyborg is a cybernetic

organism, a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction. The cyborg is a matter of fiction and lived experience that changes what counts as women's experience in the late twentieth century."

The shot pans left quickly, awaiting a reply. Text begins to scroll: RB says "the make-up has the snowy thickness of a mask: it is not a painted face, but one set in plaster, protected by the surface of the colour, not by its lineaments."

The shot cuts to the right computer. The following text is scrolling:

DH says "The cyborg is a creature in a post-gender world; it has no truck with bisexuality, pre-oedipal symbiosis, unalienated labour, or other seductions to organic wholeness through a final appropriation of the powers of the parts into a higher unity."

I am doll arms,
big veins, doll heart

Yeah, they really want
you,
They really want you,
They really do.
Yeah, they really want
you,
They really want you,
but I do too.

I want to be the girl
With the most cake.

I love him so much
It just turns to hate.

I fake it so real
I am beyond fake.

And some day you will
ache
Like I ache
And some day you will
ache

Like I ache
Some day you will

ache
Like I ache

And some day you will
ache
Like I ache

The shot cuts to the left computer.
The following text is scrolling: RB says
"Amid all this snow at once fragile and
compact, the eyes alone, black like
strange soft flesh, but not in the least
expressive, are two faintly tremulous
wounds."

I am doll parts,
Bad skin, doll heart.
It stands for nice,
For the rest of my life.

The shot cuts to the right computer.

The following text is scrolling:
DH says "An origin story in the 'Western',
 humanist sense depends on a pretty kettle
of mettle: the myth of original unity,
fullness, bliss and terror,
represented by the phallic mother from
whom all humans must separate, the
task of individual development and of
history, the two potent myths inscribed
most powerfully for us in psychoanalysis
and Marxism."

Yeah, they really want
you,
They really want you,
They really do.
Yeah, they really want
you
They really want you,
But I do too.

The shot cuts to the left computer.
The following text is scrolling: RB says
"the essence was not to be degraded,
her face was not to have any reality
except that of its perfection, which
was intellectual more than formal."

I want to be the girl
With the most cake.

I love him so much
It just turns to hate.

The shot cuts to the right computer.
The following text is scrolling:
DH says "By the late twentieth

I fake it so real
I am beyond fake.

century in United States scientific
culture, the boundary between
human and animal is thoroughly
breached."

The shot cuts to the left computer.

The following text is scrolling: RB says
"And yet, in this deified face, something
sharper than a mask is looming: a
kind of voluntary and therefore human
relation between the curve of the
nostrils and the arch of the eyebrows;
a rare, individual function relating two
regions of the face."

The shot cuts to the right computer.

The following text is scrolling:
DH says "The cyborg appears in myth
precisely where the boundary between
human and animal is transgressed.
Far from signalling a walling off of
people from other living beings,
cyborgs signal disturbingly and
pleasurably tight coupling. Bestiality
has a new status in this cycle of
marriage and exchange."

And some day you will
ache
Like I ache.
And some day you will
ache
Like I ache.
Some day you will
ache
Like I ache.
And some day you will
ache
Like I ache

And some day you will
ache
Like I ache
And some day you will
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Like I ache.

And some day you will
ache
Like I ache
Some day you will
ache
Like I ache
And some day you will
ache
Like I ache.

The shot cuts to the left computer.
The following text is scrolling: RB says
"Garbo's face represents this fragile
moment ... when the archetype leans
towards the fascination of mortal
faces, when the clarity of the flesh
as essence yields its face to a
lyricism of Woman."

The shot cuts to the right computer.
The following text is scrolling:
DH says "Late twentieth-century
machines have made thoroughly
ambiguous the difference between
natural and artificial, mind and body,
self-developing and externally
designed, and many other distinctions
that used to apply to organisms
and machines."

[Note: Each shot is held as long as is necessary
for the text to scroll out onto the screen
plus 5 seconds.]

A Pretty Kettle of Fish

The problem with school these days is that there's no freedom; everything's so regimented -- and it's going to the dogs. You can't do anything without someone watching you; you aren't allowed to walk down the hall without a pass, and they even have someone watching the whole time you're in the bathroom. To me, school feels like prison looks in the movies.

I'm not kidding. You know how in the movies there are all of these bells and alarms that signal when it's time to eat or when it's time to sleep? Well, at my school they have the same bells and alarms -- and they tell us to do the same kinds of things. OK, we're not supposed to go to sleep, but they signal us when we're supposed to eat, when we're supposed to walk, and when we're supposed to sit. And how are we supposed to sit? Eyes straight ahead, facing forward. Remember how the prisoner's had to line up in *Bad Boys*? Same routine. Don't look at your neighbor; no wandering eyes.

Now, with Clinton's recommendation for school uniforms, we may even have to dress like prisoners. I think it might be funny if in protest we all wore prisons blues, or even stripes, to school one day; that'd make for a rattling good news yarn. I understand that people want to make the schools less dangerous and a better place to learn, but I'm not sure that making them more prison-like will get the job done. Prisons don't seem to be doing a very good job of making our country any less dangerous, so why do they think it will work in schools?

For me, I guess the worst part is that I feel so frustrated with schools today. That's the real problem. My school seems to be more intent on frustrating rather than educating me. I say this because the teachers and administrators accuse us of being disrespectful, but honestly I don't see anything going on that might inspire respect, or even deserve it. First of all, it seems to me that most rules and

regulations, and really the way that classrooms are run, disrespects us as students. When does the school respect us? They just want to keep us under their thumb. For instance, the teachers have all the power when we're in the classrooms. If the students want to discuss something, but it's not the focus of the lesson plan, too bad for the students. It doesn't even matter if the topic is related to the lesson plan; most of the time the teacher just gets to decide what's a proper topic of discussion and the students' interests are ignored. We have no say in what happens to us; they make all the decisions without even considering what we might be interested in -- in short, they have all of the control, all of the power and we're just here to do what they say (and not what they do, because if ever there was a double standard at work, my friend, it's at my school).

That's the problem with school today.

Play Misty for Me : A Rattling Good Yarn

Rated: R
Stars: Clint Eastwood, Jessica Parker, Donna Mills
Director: Clint Eastwood, debut

I have to say that *Play Misty for Me* is a must see. Released in 1971, the film wears it well although it is dated. This film has everything a viewer could want: a suspenseful plot, comic relief, and provocative cinematography plus, that great *je ne sais quoi* that makes a film look like it was made in the '70s (perhaps it's the film stock they used, or maybe the lighting).

In this film, a young Eastwood stars, not as the vigilante hero he was to become in later films, but rather as the cat's meow he was to become to his female fans. Eastwood plays Dave Garver, a Carmel DJ and gay lothario who has a mysterious admirer. This admirer's signature is that she always requests that he play "Misty." As the film unwinds, the admirer, Evelyn, becomes obsessive and eventually violent. Clearly a precursor to *Fatal Attraction*, *Play Misty for Me* is interesting as it presents Hollywood's first psychopathic fan.

Evelyn's fandom leads her to attempt to attract the attentions of Garver, but alas, he manages to pick her up first, before she even gets her seduction started. Unfortunately, Garver buys a pig in a poke; Evelyn turns out to be dead sea fruit. Although there are several references to Garver's sexual exploits with myriad women, the film spends much of its time making Garver a sympathetic and likeable character. He steadfastly stays with and looks after Evelyn through her traumas, even having her as a house guest for awhile. He is so attentive that the viewer forgets what his opening pick-up game implied about his ethics.

The weird drama that unfolds between Evelyn and Garver is offset by two familiar characters from the Blaxploitation era. Garver's fellow DJ provides half of the film's comic relief as he jokes with Garver about his female troubles. This fellow DJ

represents the cool black jazz DJ *and* the stable family man as he is married and apparently devoted to his wife. Garver's cleaning woman, Biddle, is the stereotypically funny, good natured maid that we've seen so often on our screens. She plays a particularly poignant role as it is Evelyn's attack on her that clearly marks her fandom as psychopathy. To obsess about and hound Garver is one thing, after all he did pick her up, bed her a few times, and then try to just forget about her. He is somewhat responsible for the mess he's in. Biddle, however, is nothing short of lovable and thus Evelyn's attack on her is clearly hysterical.

I find it interesting that this film presents no psychodrama concerning Evelyn's motivations. That is, *Play Misty for Me* offers no psychological explanations as to why she is an obsessed fan. Instead, fandom is represented as hysterical -- a humorous situation given the explosion of popularity that Eastwood was on the verge of experiencing. In fact, this film is odd yet interesting because of its true to life relationships. Although being a fan of local radio talent seems a bit excessive (because they are often seen about town living their daily lives like the rest of us), being a fan of Clint Eastwood the movie star seems perfectly sane. Watching this film all these years later, it is hard not to read Eastwood's massive popularity back onto the character of Dave Garver. And why shouldn't we? The fact of the matter is that Eastwood is probably at his sexiest in this film that prominently features his gravelly yet breathy voice.

I'd like to close by noting that in addition to the great crazy fan plot, *Play Misty for Me* offers other treats for the *cinephile*. The film includes some fabulous candid footage of the Monterey Jazz Festival that shouldn't be missed and, the cinematography and editing of the film's climax are beyond comparison. I'll tease you by saying that the artful use of the point of view shot really puts the viewer in the driver's seat.

The cat's meow

In the *Rolling Stone* cover story on Courtney Love, the author describes Courtney's vocals as a "diamond hard shriek"; she has a "barbed lyrical tongue." I have a history of attraction to brash women who shriek in expression of anger rather than hysteria (although the former is often confused with the latter). I've always wanted to take a page out of their book; y'know, just lay my cards on the table. Unfortunately, the opportunity never presents itself -- a situation (or rather the construction of a situation) that betrays the difference between who I am and who I claim to want to be. Courtney Love hardly waits for the opportunity to present itself; or perhaps it might be more revealing to say that Courtney (and women like her) see opportunity where I see impossibility. I don't shriek for fear of coming off as hysterical; Courtney shrieks in spite of this possibility. Yet Courtney shrieks about the misreading of anger as hysteria -- and people still don't hear her, still call her hysterical. Courtney continues shrieking.

What I envy about Courtney is the situation she's constructed for herself. Shrieking isn't her only mode; she speaks calmly too. She has constructed a persona that allows her to speak with radically different discourses -- and while many people don't listen and write her off, some do hear her. I have chosen to live my life in spaces that don't allow for such radical persona switching (for such complicated persona building). My search for credibility leads me to reject such tactics for myself (and forces me into a life of quiet envy). I live in the straight world, and getting credit in the straight world often means keeping my emotions out of my discourse.

I identify with Courtney's shriek because I can shriek along with it under a guise.

<u>Between you and me and the bed bugs</u>

Third wave feminism inherits one of its crosses from second wave feminism: the beauty myth. Second wave feminism, tasting gall and wormwood, denounced Western culture's standards of beauty, and

rightly so. The second wave, however, did not adequately deal with the hole left by the denunciation of an issue (beauty) that we as women learn defines us. Our looks are with us from the time we exit the womb (and sometimes before). Third wave feminism inherits the difficult task of figuring out what to do in this situation; how to cope with the fact that we are not, and cannot be, invisible? And even if we could achieve it, would we want to be invisible? Although we very well may not want to conform to the standards of beauty our culture offers us, we cannot deny the fact that we look. Second wave feminism's answer to the challenge of visual style was the hippie-earth mother. This look was supposedly free from the trappings of Western beauty because it was more natural. Third wave feminism is suspicious (and rightly so) of this construction of the "natural" woman. The hippie-earth-mother look is as highly constructed as Garbo's look; the category "natural" simply trades the fetishes of upswept hair, arched eyebrows, and long lashes for those of uncoiffed hair, unshaven legs, and loose fitting, billowy clothing. Neither look is less constructed than the other. In my attempt at hippie-dom I tried to convert my look from the highly artificial look of the punk to the naturalized look of the hippie. I found myself trapped by my tastes, however. I discovered that no matter how I looked, I never ceased to appreciate those people who expressed a sense of grace in their visual performances -- no matter what their style. My appreciation for looks undercut my attempt at denying my ability to look. I could not be invisible and I could not blind myself to those around me. I felt haunted by the fact that I was trained to look. The ghosts of this training deconstructed the appeal to naturalness offered by the hippie-earth-mother fetish. (What does Barthes say? What is ideology? It is culture masquerading as nature. Ergo, the hippie-earth-mother is the most highly stereotyped and ideologically complicit look we can buy. All other looks, because they are consciously farther removed from our concept of the natural, already begin to deconstruct themselves a bit by recognizing their artificiality.)

At sixes and sevens

When I was new wave (16-22) I really enjoyed wearing "unmentionables" out in public; I was intrigued by people's reactions to such performances. Beyond this display of underwear and sex shop goods, I found that simply mismatching costume and context constituted quite a bone of contention. I wore 1940s cocktail dresses to work, wrapped myself in furs and fake jewels at 9am and went to class. Through these experiments, I learned a lot about the semiotics of dressing -- and its connection to our culture. I witnessed strangers getting angry with me because I was dressed improperly, because I was wearing a particular piece of jewelry, because I was using art supplies for make-up -- or because I wasn't wearing make-up at all.

Waking Up with Television
(Laying my cards on the table)

What follows is an experiment to see what might happen given a Godardian model for analytic writing. Using Godardian filmmaking as an inventio for analytic writing, we can generate the following list of instructions:

(1) Bring analytic writing closer to the body; tell a few home truths.
(2) Reinvestigate archives; mix genres -- narrative, expository, documentary, etc.
(3) Transform the means of communication; use the organizational strategies of a newspaper (numerical or alphabetical).
(4) Alter the form of the analytic essay; employ strategies of quotation and fragmentation.
(5) Alter the frame; reframe within the frame.
(6) Call attention to the apparatus; illustrate the paralysis of the standard academic essay; disrupt this paralysis by illustrating another way of thinking through the print medium.

Square Pegs

The acceptable archive for academic research stands to reason. Academic research consults only "respectable" books and journals -- publications which house rigorous critiques of canonical works (even if it is an "opened" canon). To analyze The Trouble with Harry, I reinvestigate the archive and look for those documents excluded by standard academic research. These sources allow me to follow Godard's lead by juxtaposing genres in both my research and writing. The analysis which follows consists of autobiographical information, journalistic writing, synopses, and reviews as well as information from my cultural memory. The writing is hybrid, both analytic and creative.

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... as well as my memories of television.

Movie Magazines

Because a class on Hitchcock is currently being taught, all of the acceptable sources are charged from the library and I'm crying crocodile tears. My sources for this analysis are some movie reviews, autobiographies of the stars, dictionaries of both stars and directors, my cultural memory, and a synopsis of the plot. I also managed to read an introduction to an analysis of Hitchcock's early films which conveniently catalogued much of the criticism his work (early and late) has received. The journals I consulted had nothing to say about *The Trouble with Harry* (mostly for reasons that are obvious, but also for some that are not). Their analyses of the "great" Hitchcock films however taught me a valuable lesson -- reading these critiques is boring; I prefer my less acceptable sources.

Televisual Connections

Jerry Mathers, who played little Arnie Rogers in *The Trouble with Harry*, also played Beaver (Theodore) Cleaver on *Leave It to Beaver*, a 1950s domestic television comedy. This reminds us that John Forsythe who played Sam Marlowe in *The Trouble with Harry* and the father on *Bachelor Father*, another 1950s domestic television comedy. Forsythe also played Blake Carrington on *Dynasty* -- which I guess we should call a melodrama because of its status as a nighttime drama which is related to a daytime drama which is a soap opera which is historically related to melodrama. (Stands to reason.) Melodramas often center on the home, so perhaps the connection between *Dynasty* and *Leave it to Beaver* or *Bachelor*

Father is stronger than I first realized. (The melodramatic connection is important because some critics seem to think that melodrama is one of Hitchcock's great problems.) Forsythe also played Charlie on *Charlie's Angels* although there wasn't much playing because Forsythe was only a mysteriously informed voice on a speaker phone. Although she does not claim to hear voices on a speaker phone, Shirley MacLaine (who plays Arnie's mother) has laid claim to a certain mysticism. She too seems to have some mysterious information and has made the television talk show circuit many times. Because these connections bear the burden of proof, they must be part and parcel of the trouble with Harry.

The trouble with television

I chose to work with *The Trouble with Harry* because it is surrounded by mystery. I'd seen the film on television and was intrigued with what I thought was a Hitchcockian sleeper. I figured that I would not be able to write about it because no one would have seen it (except those who watch the late show on television). Much to my surprise, most of my friends and classmates had seen the film (some even as recently as a week) ago; they loved it. I began to feel better about my chances of getting it approved. My film professor did approve the film adding only that he hated *The Trouble with Harry*; he thought it was a dead letter. I began to wonder, maybe the film was just awful -- I'd only seen it once. Yet everyone else loved it ... so I thought, why?

Professor Ray told me that he'd rushed across London in the rain to see the rerelease of *The Trouble with Harry*; I'd seen it on television. He suggested that perhaps my reaction was a product of context (I wondered if his was). Compared to the programming usually broadcast on television, *The Trouble with Harry* did look pretty good.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

While the push for understanding, the desire to explain instead
of practice, that dominates cultural studies maintains one of the
fine lines between fan and critic, this push leaves the field lifeless
and uninteresting. By continually separating us from them and
thereby legitimating the discipline of cultural studies within the
institutional boundaries of the university, reader response theories
prove themselves ineffectually abstract. Having promised to
enlighten the way people, or at least students, habitually interact
with popular culture this method proves itself too abstruse where
the concrete, particular behaviors and habits of people are
concerned. As a discipline, cultural studies is the performance of a
basic hesitation concerning the move from theory to praxis. Unlike
other cultural studies research, this project does not address issues
of audience reception. Instead, this project aims to explore and

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invent a means by which we might import a popular culture practice into the domain of schooling. In *Inventing Zin/ography*, I approach fan writing heuretically as a postmodern form. The goal of this experiment is to learn how to apply popular writing strategies in a learned way so that we might transform the work of cultural studies from a critical machine into a machine that is also creative and culturally active. What I have proposed here is not yet another conceptual method for cultural studies, but rather a poetics. These chapters generate a critical method which teaches students and scholars to be *both* cultural agents and cultural theorists at the same time.

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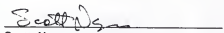
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Professor of English

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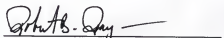
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5. Cindy Sherman, *Untitled Film Still*, 1978. Black-and -white photograph, 8x10" (21.3 x 26 cm). Collection Arthur and Carol Goldberg, New York (Photo: courtesy Metro Pictures).

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